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It was vain to think of flying the swiftest horse, or fastest sailing ship could be of no use to carry us out of this danger; and the full persuasion of this rivetted me to the spot where I stood.—P. 324.

BRUCE'S  
TRAVELS AND ADVENTURES  
IN  
ABYSSINIA

EDITED BY J. MORISON CLINGAN, M.A.



EDINBURGH  
ADAM AND CHARLES BLACK, NORTH BRIDGE

1860

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BRUCE'S TRAVELS IN ABYSSINIA.



## PREFACE.

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ON the principle that a traveller's story is best told in his own words, the present abridgment of Bruce's Travels is written in the form of a personal narrative. The constant recurrence of such phrases as "Mr. Bruce," and "our traveller," is thus avoided, and the book is likely to be at once more readable and complete than it would have been, if the usual plan had been adopted. The aim of the Editor has been to give the work as much as possible the appearance of an original production. Bruce is made to tell his own story, and his own language is used throughout as uniformly, and with as little alteration, as possible. When the reader is informed that the original edition of these Travels consists of four large quarto volumes, of from 500 to 600 pages each, with a fifth volume by way of appendix, he may conceive that considerable freedom must have been taken with their contents. Some parts have necessarily been passed over, and others have been much condensed. The *Annals of Abyssinia*, for example, which occupy the whole of the second volume of the original work, are here



given in a single chapter of 32 pages. But the Editor believes that no essential portion of Bruce's work has been omitted or unduly condensed ; and he trusts that those who are familiar with the original publication will give him credit for having presented, as fairly as can be done in an abridgment, the substance of the traveller's bulky volumes.

To render the present work more complete, the Editor has prefixed to the Travels a brief Sketch of the Life of Bruce.

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# SKETCH

OF

## THE LIFE OF BRUCE.

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OMNE SOLUM FORTI PATRIA\* Such is the motto selected by James Bruce for the title-page of the last volume of his "Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile." Few men have ever so fully as himself demonstrated its truth. During the ten years he spent 'in Africa, among savage men and scenes of danger and desolation, his life was as useful and cheerful, as really that of a true Briton and a gentleman, as if it had been tranquilly passed at his own country seat of Kin-naird, in the society of his friends, and in the prosecution of his favourite studies or amusements. Whether as British Consul at the barbarous court of Algiers, or as a private traveller, "unprotected, forlorn, and alone, or at times associated with beggars and banditti," he ever conducted himself as a brave man should. He passed, to use his own words, "through melancholy and dreary deserts, ventilated with poisonous winds, and glowing with eternal sunbeams," and "described a circumference whose greater axis comprehended twenty-two degrees of the equator, in which dreadful circle was contained all that is terrible to the

\* Every soil is a fatherland to the brave man.



feelings, prejudicial to the health, or fatal to the life of man." In these travels he exhibited the most indomitable perseverance : danger and fatigue seemed only to make him more determined to succeed. He could make himself at home, alike in the tents of the wandering Arabs, in the canja on the Nile, in the deserted caves of the troglydites, and in the royal palace of Gondar. Indeed, those years which were passed in this great expedition appear, notwithstanding (or rather, perhaps, on account of) the numberless difficulties and hardships he had to encounter during their course, to have been the happiest period of his life ; and often, no doubt, Mr. Bruce, the famous traveller, on the one hand the object of the highest admiration, and on the other the mark of the most malignant criticism, wished himself once more Yagoube, the physician and soldier, at the court of Tecla Haimanout, in the society of the beautiful Ozoro Esther, her brave son Ayto Confu, her stern old husband Ras Michael, and the many other friends whose sincere affection for him he could not doubt.

Little is needed to complete the story of the life of Bruce, as he himself tells it in his Travels. These contain nearly all that is of general public interest in his history ; and the present writer merely requires to show, as shortly as may be, how that adventurous life began, and how it ended.

JAMES BRUCE, the African traveller, was born at the family residence of Kinnaird, in the county of Stirling, on the 14th of December 1730. His father, David Bruce, was the eldest son of David Hay of Woodcockdale, in Linlithgowshire, and Helen,

daughter of Alexander Bruce of Kinnaird, who bequeathed to her and her lineal descendants his name and estate.

It was never Bruce's happiness to experience the tenderness of a mother. Helen Bruce died of a lingering disease ere her son had completed the third year of his age. The boy, as he grew up, was delicate and sickly, and it was feared that he might be carried off by the complaint that proved fatal to his mother. His temper was gentle and quiet, though in after years, as he himself confesses,\* it became hasty and passionate. At twelve years of age, he was sent to the school of Harrow-on-the-Hill, then conducted by Dr. Cox, under whom he appears to have made rapid progress. At Harrow Bruce made the acquaintance of several individuals of ability and distinction, whose friendship he retained through life. When he left this school, in 1746, his health, which had always been delicate, was by no means established. He was tall, beyond the measure of his years ; his breast was weak, and he was often afflicted with a violent cough ; and his relations were apprehensive of his falling into consumption. As, however, the symptoms were not yet of a very alarming description, his return home was delayed till the following year, when the Jacobite rebellion of 1746 was at an end, and the tranquillity of the country restored.

Bruce, having now to make choice of a profession, fixed upon the study of theology, intending to become a clergyman of the Church of England. This, however, not being in accordance with his father's wishes, he gave up the Church for the law, and com-

\* See page 225.

menced a course of study to qualify him for becoming an advocate at the Scottish bar. With this view, he entered the University of Edinburgh in November 1747. He attended the lectures of the professors of civil law, Scotch law, and universal history ; but soon found that his new studies were not suited to the bent of his genius. The delicate state of his health, moreover, was unfavourable to the prosecution of laborious and uncongenial study ; and, in the middle of his first session, the return of his former complaints obliged him to leave college, and abandon the profession of the law for ever.

The bracing air and the invigorating sports of the country soon restored Bruce to health ; and, the law being relinquished, he had again to consider in what direction he should turn his energies. India offered to the ardent mind of the future explorer of the Nile a field of enterprise peculiarly promising and attractive ; and his friends advised him to petition the court of directors of the East India Company for the liberty of settling as a free trader under their patronage. He left Scotland for London in July 1753, with a view to prosecute this design. While engaged in taking the necessary steps, he made the acquaintance of Adriana Allan, a young lady of beauty and accomplishments. She was the daughter of Mrs. Allan, the widow of an eminent wine-merchant, who by attention and perseverance had raised himself to opulence. To know this amiable young person was to love her. Bruce found her attractions more powerful than those which India had to present ; and his offer of marriage being accepted by Miss Allan, and approved of by her mother, all his

schemes of settling in the East were cheerfully abandoned. The marriage took place on the 3d of February 1754. Mrs. Allan gave her son-in-law a share of the wine business, and he at once began to take an active part in its management. He was now in a fair way of acquiring a fortune suitable to his wishes and his merit, and was looking forward to a life of quiet happiness, when the fair prospect was suddenly overcast by the untimely death of his young wife. A few months after their marriage, Mrs. Bruce began to show evident symptoms of consumption, a disease to which there was a hereditary tendency in her family. First, she was removed to Bristol, where she experienced little benefit ; and then, as a last resource, it was resolved to try the mild climate of the south of France. She had reached Paris on this melancholy journey, when the fatigues of travelling, and the rapid progress of her insidious disease, rendered it impossible for her to be conveyed any farther. She expired a week after her arrival ; and at midnight, between the 10th and 11th of October, Bruce consigned to the grave the body of his young wife. But for the kindness of the English ambassador, who gave him a grave in the burying ground of the embassy, Bruce must have interred his wife in a common wood-yard, the only place which the intolerance of Popery would then allow as a last resting-place to heretics. As it was, only a few hurried rites of respect could be paid to the dead, in the silence of midnight ; and as Bruce turned away, he felt, as he himself expressed it in a letter to his father, that all his comfort and happiness had been laid in the grave.

Almost frantic with grief, he left Paris immediately after

the ceremony, and rode, in the most tempestuous night he had ever seen, towards Boulogne, where he arrived on the following day. There fatigue, abstinence, and grief, threw him into a fever, from which, in the course of a week, he was so far recovered as to be able to proceed to London.

After this melancholy event, Bruce, who had now lost that eager attachment to business which he exhibited during the few months of his wedded life, gave up the chief management to his partner. Being resolved to embrace the first opportunity to resign his share in the wine trade altogether, he began to prepare himself for a kind of life very different from that which he had hitherto led. He assiduously studied the Spanish and Portuguese languages, with the view of being able to carry out a long-cherished scheme of travelling on the Continent. His plan, happily, coincided with the purposes of trade; and in July 1757 he sailed for Portugal, having it for the professed object of his journey to be present at the vintage of that season, though his real purpose was to view the state of society, art, and science in the peninsula. He passed the remainder of the year in Portugal and Spain; and, in the beginning of 1758, crossed the Pyrenees into France. From France he travelled to Germany, visiting the chief places of interest in the valley of the Rhine, as far down as Cologne, where he turned to the left, and proceeded to Brussels. On the second day after his arrival there, he got involved in a quarrel which resulted in a duel. Bruce wounded his antagonist twice, and so seriously that he found it necessary to leave Brussels immediately. He proceeded to,

Hanover, where he witnessed the battle of Crevelt, the first military operation he had ever seen. At Rotterdam, he received intelligence of his father's death, which caused him immediately to return to England, where he arrived in July 1758, having been absent rather more than a year. He did not immediately visit Scotland, being still connected with the wine business, which occupied his attention for some time after his arrival. The establishment of the Carron Iron Company in the neighbourhood of his estate caused a very considerable addition to his fortune, as his property contained coal mines, which were required by the company for smelting their iron. In 1761 he withdrew from the wine trade.

During a residence of a few days at Ferrol, in Galicia, Bruce had heard a report that war was impending between Spain and England. It had at once occurred to him, that an attack by a British squadron upon this point of the Spanish coast could not fail to be successful. On his return to England, he explained his project to his friend Mr. Wood, then Under-Secretary of State, who laid the matter before Mr. Pitt. At this point Bruce begins to tell his own story; and it is unnecessary to do more than touch in the most summary manner upon the main events in the interesting narrative he himself affords us.

The project of a hostile landing at Ferrol, in the interest of Portugal, with which country Spain was at war, came to nothing; but Lord Halifax, who had thought favourably of the scheme, shortly afterwards offered Bruce the post of British Consul at Algiers. Lord Halifax represented to him that this official posi-

tion would give him facilities for exploring those still unknown countries, and taking drawings for his Majesty's collection of the magnificent ruins mentioned by Dr. Shaw\* and other travellers. He promised, also, that he should have leave to appoint a vice-consul, to attend to the business of his office during his absence ; and intimated that he might expect substantial rewards for services to his country in this field. The discovery of the source of the Nile was sometimes hinted at in these conversations as a consummation devoutly to be wished, though not to be expected from so inexperienced a traveller. Bruce accepted the offer, inwardly resolving to attempt the great task that had baffled all the efforts of kings and travellers for two thousand years.

Bruce arrived at Algiers in March, 1763. He occupied the dangerous post of British Consul till 1765, when, at his own urgent and repeated request, he was relieved from it by the appointment of a successor. Immediately he prepared for a journey through Barbary. In the course of several different expeditions, he visited the places of chief interest in the kingdoms of Algiers and Tunis, afterwards sailing to Syria, where he took careful drawings of the ruins of Palmyra and Baalbec.

After a brief stay at Sidon, Bruce sailed for Egypt in June, 1768. From the Bey of Cairo he received letters of recommendation to various persons of great authority in Upper Egypt,

\* Shaw's "Travels in Barbary and the Levant" contain a good deal of curious and interesting matter. They were first published at Oxford in 1738, in folio. A second and enlarged edition was ready for publication at the author's death ; and a third edition in two vols., 8vo, was published in Edinburgh in 1808.

Abyssinia, and Sennaar, armed with which, he set out on his dangerous enterprise. He ascended the Nile as far as Syene, stopping to visit all places of interest on his line of route ; and then, descending the stream again to Kenné, he crossed the desert with a caravan to Cosseir, on the Red Sea. His voyage in the Red Sea is full of interest ; but there is not space to refer to any of its particulars here. On the 19th of September 1769, his vessel came to an anchor in the harbour of Masuah. "That bloody assassin, the Naybe of Masuah," detained him for nearly two months, endeavouring to extort money from him by threats of violence, and it was not till after receiving very peremptory letters from Ras Michael, Prime Minister of the King of Abyssinia, that he suffered him to proceed.

The journey from Masuah to Gondar was toilsome and dangerous in the extreme, and occupied three months. His skill in medicine, which he had acquired during his residence in Algiers, and his superiority in horsemanship, and the use of arms, speedily gained for him the respect of the king and Ras Michael, and he was raised to various posts of honour in the royal household. Bruce's delineation of the character of the old Ras has been much admired—it has been declared to be so genuine and consistent throughout, that no writer but Shakspeare could have *invented* it. The whole of this part of Bruce's narrative is full of interest. He had ample opportunities of observing every phase of life in Abyssinia, in peace and war ; and the scenes which he describes often derive a heightened interest from their connection with his own experiences and adventures.



After many vexatious delays, Bruce at length, on the 4th of November, 1770, reached the source of the Nile, the goal of his ambition. Then came a brief interval of painful depression. He had gained his end, but what was its value ?—

“What’s Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,  
That he should weep for her?”

From this state of despondency he speedily rallied. After making careful observations of the situation of the springs, and noting the distinguishing features of the surrounding country, he returned to Gondar ; and there, with all his old energy, began to make arrangements for his return through Sennaar. Eager though he was to return home, it was with much regret that he bade farewell to his many attached friends in Abyssinia, and advanced into a country still more barbarous than any he had yet traversed. At Teawa, the principal village of Atbara, the most extravagant demands were made upon him by the Shekh, whom he was obliged to overawe by presenting a blunderbuss at him in his own house. Four miserable months were passed at Sennaar, where the queens, who were hideously ugly, required all sorts of services from him as a physician. This was not the worst of it : the inhabitants took every opportunity to insult him, and would gladly have attacked him and his little company if they had dared ; and, to crown all, his money was exhausted, and the person on whom he had letters of credit refused to supply him. In this emergency he had to part with a massive gold chain, the gift of the king of Abyssinia, only six links of which,

out of one hundred and eighty-four, were restored to him when all debts were paid.

Our traveller had now to cross the Great Desert of Nubia, a vast tract of burning sand, with wells at distant intervals, to miss one of which might be death. The hot simoom prostrated his strength, and threatened him with suffocation ; and the moving pillars of sand sometimes seemed as if about to overwhelm his whole company in one common destruction. One or two miserable Turcorory, who had joined his party much against his will, perished on the journey ; the camels, too, began to fail, one after another ; and at length, at less than a good day's journey from Syene, the camels that survived could not be got upon their legs after the usual halt ; so both camels and baggage had to be abandoned. A profound melancholy settled down upon Bruce's spirit, when he had thus to leave behind him the evidences of all his labours and dangers ; and when he at length succeeded in reaching Syene, his first request to the Aga was for camels to return into the desert for his valuable papers. He happily succeeded in recovering all he had left behind ; and, after staying at Syene for some days to recruit his wasted strength, he embarked on the Nile, and floated down to Cairo. A few days after his arrival there he procured from the Bey a very advantageous firman in favour of British merchant vessels. From Cairo he proceeded to Alexandria, where he at once took ship for Marseilles. He landed safely in March 1773, after an absence from Europe of ten years.

The above is a very hasty summary of the travels narrated at .

length in this volume. Taking up the thread of Bruce's history where he himself drops it, we have now to follow it to the end.

On landing at Marseilles, Bruce was met with the hearty congratulations of the Comte de Buffon, M. Guys, and many other gentlemen who had taken a particular interest in his travels. For about a month after his arrival he endured great agony from the guinea-worm. When his health was in some measure restored, he set out for Paris in company with his friend the Comte de Buffon. The reception he met with was of the most flattering description. Everywhere his travels were the subject of conversation ; and his company was courted by persons of the first distinction. His health being still delicate, he set out for Italy, where he resided for some time. At Bologna and Rome he was the object of much attention. It is believed that, in the latter city, he was admitted, heretic though he was, to an audience with Pope Clement XIV., the celebrated Ganganelli, who presented him with a series of gold medals relating to several transactions of his pontificate. In the spring of 1774 Bruce returned to France, but it was not till the middle of June that he came to England, from which he had now been absent twelve years. Soon after his arrival he was introduced to George III., who honoured with his approbation Bruce's great exertions in the cause of geographical discovery, and accepted his drawings of Baalbec, Palmyra, and the African cities. In the autumn Bruce went to Scotland, where he received a cordial welcome both in Edinburgh and in his native county.

The curiosity of the public regarding his travels was very

great, and Bruce had in the frankest manner communicated to such persons as had the opportunity of making his acquaintance many particulars regarding the strange countries he had visited. "Truth is strange, stranger than fiction." When people heard of a nation that ate flesh reeking from the living animal ; of women wearing rings in their noses and their lips, and using the entrails of oxen for a head-dress ; of girls of ten years of age being mothers ; of banquets at which the gross sensuality which in civilized countries is only indulged in secret, was openly and shamelessly practised ; of a little fly that forced whole tribes of men periodically to migrate to the sands, and the buzz of whose wings made even the camel, "the ship of the desert," go mad with terror ; and, to instance no other marvels, of himself, a friendless traveller, rising high in the graces of the king of Abyssinia, and being appointed to offices of great dignity—the truth appeared to them so strange, and it was so different from their notions of the fitnesses and proprieties of things, that they were easily persuaded by the whisper of calumny to set it down as fiction. Some even went so far as to assert that he had never been in Abyssinia at all !\* Bruce had the benefit of the opinions of many of the critics upon his travels long before they were written ; and it was well for him that he had. He fortified himself in his own proud sense of integrity against the malignant attacks of the envious and the ignorant. Knowing well the reception which his book would meet with from a certain class of critics, and resolved never to stoop to notice them, he took

\* See the "Gentleman's Magazine" for 1789.

the opportunity of the publication of his Travels to express for the whole herd of them his unmitigated scorn and contempt. He thus by anticipation gave to the attacks made upon his work, and upon his own character through it, the only reply which a man of honour and high spirit could condescend to give ; and, having done that, he was willing to wait for the justice which never fails to come at last, though it may be sometimes too late. "What I have written," says he, "I have written. My readers have before them, in the present volumes, all that I shall ever say, directly or indirectly, upon the subject ; and I do, without one moment's anxiety, trust my defence to an impartial, well-informed, and judicious public."

Bruce's Travels did not appear till the year 1790, seventeen years after his return to Europe. In 1776 he had married Mary Dundas, daughter of Thomas Dundas, Esq. of Fingask, by whom he had three children, two sons and a daughter. On the death of this amiable lady in 1785, his friends urged him, as a means of diverting his melancholy, to set to work to prepare his Travels for publication, and he complied. The book was eagerly expected both by friends and foes. It appeared in 1790, in five large quarto volumes, with the title—"Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile, in the years 1768, 1769, 1770, 1771, 1772, and 1773. In five volumes. By James Bruce of Kinnaird, Esq., F.R.S."\*

Of course the work was universally read. The critics aforesaid did their work *con amore* ; but Bruce, though he no doubt

\* A second edition, corrected and enlarged, in 7 vols. 8vo, was published, under the care of A. Murray, Esq.

chafed at the attacks made on him in various reviews and other periodical publications, was doubtless comforted by the assurance that his book was appreciated by many persons of the first literary reputation. A single passage may be quoted here, from a long letter written to Bruce by Hugh Blair, Professor of Rhetoric in the University of Edinburgh:—"With the rest of the world, I had great expectations from the work, and I can now say that I have not been disappointed. Large as your book is, and in all its parts not equally interesting, I can assure you I was sorry when I had done with it. It contains much information, and much curious matter. You have made a great addition to our knowledge of the geography of the world, and revealed a part of the earth that was before unknown." Bruce had here the opinion of one of the judicious; and it is to be hoped that he found it "overweigh a whole theatre of others." It is needless here to refer particularly to the attacks made upon his reputation in connection with his Travels. They were numerous and virulent; and they did not even terminate with his life. It had become the fashion to regard Bruce's narrative as unworthy of credit; and we find such men as Lord Valentia and Mr. Salt, who travelled over a part of the same ground after his death, evidently actuated less by the love of truth than by the desire to convict him as frequently as possible of "falsehood," "exaggeration," and "want of veracity." It is not now necessary to defend Bruce from these attacks; for he has outlived them. It is granted at once that Bruce's book had faults, and great ones. It contained a great deal that was of scarcely any interest to the

general reader—as, for example, the annals of Abyssinia, which occupy more than an entire volume, and several incidental dissertations on different subjects suggested by his narrative ; and on the other hand, the reader was left to pick up fragmentary information, scattered here and there throughout the work, on subjects that should have received a distinct and careful notice. In many parts it was ill digested ; and the want of method in the general observations, and the confusion arising from the similarity, and sometimes the sameness of the names of Abyssinian persons figuring in his narrative (which might have been greatly avoided by explanations in the proper places), were fitted greatly to perplex the majority of readers. It is confessed, even, that Bruce, writing sixteen years after the events which formed the subject of his history, sometimes was guilty of exaggeration, and confusion of dates, etc. But, after all these deductions, the merits of Bruce's work are of the most substantial and enduring kind. In none of the main facts of his book has he been convicted of falsehood, and in not a few of them he has received, and is still receiving, the corroboration of subsequent travellers. His merit consists, not so much in having reached Geesh, and taken with exactness the latitude and longitude of the fountains of the Bahar el Azergue, or Blue River, as in having made a great and important addition to geographical knowledge, at a time when Africa was little more than a blank on the map of the world. It is still a moot point among geographers whether the Blue River or the White River is entitled to the title of the Nile ; and it was but the other day that we had a fresh specula-

tion regarding the source of this famous river.\* But however these matters may be ultimately settled, we have no doubt that Bruce's Travels will continue to be a classic in geographical literature. Bruce had to appeal from the hostile criticism of his own day to the judgment of posterity ; and posterity has already begun to do him justice. The present publication, it is hoped, may assist, to however humble an extent, in securing for the intrepid traveller that appreciation which was denied him in his lifetime.

After the publication of his Travels, Bruce occupied himself with the management of his estate, occasionally, however, corresponding with his literary friends, and devoting his attention to Biblical literature. He too keenly felt the injustice of which he had been the victim, to mingle much in society ; yet he often hospitably entertained his friends and such strangers as had introductions to him.

On Saturday, the 26th of April 1794, the restless and eventful life of Bruce came to a close. He had been entertaining some company at Kinnaird, and was going down stairs about eight o'clock in the evening, to hand a lady to her carriage, when his foot slipped and he fell headlong down several of the steps. He was taken up in a state of insensibility, from which he never rallied. He died early the next morning, and was interred in the churchyard of Larbert on the Thursday following.

Bruce was six feet four inches high, and of a very command-

\* See Captain J. H. Speke's Journal of his "Discovery of the Victoria Nyanza Lake," in *Blackwood's Magazine*, Sept., Oct., and Nov., 1859.



ing figure. He possessed, as may be easily seen from his narrative, all the qualifications of a traveller. His temper, as he himself confesses, was passionate ; but his heart was warm. He had a strict regard for honour and justice ; and this made him all the more susceptible of the anonymous imputations made against him, while it restrained him from giving them the slightest public notice. His regard for religion seems to have been deep and sincere ; and many a devout acknowledgment of the kindness of a merciful Providence is made by him in the course of his Travels.

Epitaphs do not always speak the truth ; but few people will now deny that that which is written over the grave of the African traveller in Larbert churchyard is well deserved :—

“ In this tomb are deposited the remains of James Bruce, Esq. of Kinnaird, who died on the 27th of April 1794, in the 64th year of his age. His life was spent in performing useful and splendid actions. He explored many distant regions ; he discovered the fountains of the Nile ; he traversed the deserts of Nubia.

“ He was an affectionate husband, an indulgent parent, an ardent lover of his country.

“ By the unanimous voice of mankind, his name is enrolled with those who were conspicuous for genius, for valour, and for virtue.”

# TRAVELS IN ABYSSINIA.

## CHAPTER I.

*Introductory—How these Travels came to be undertaken—I am appointed Consul at Algiers—Travel through the Kingdoms of Tunis and Tripoli—Shipwrecked, and beaten by the Arabs—Sail to Crete, Rhodes, and Syria—Visit the Ruins of Palmyra and Baalbec—Touch at Tyre and Sidon—Resolve to visit Egypt.*



VERY one will remember that period, so glorious to Britain, the latter end of the ministry of the late Earl of Chatham. I was then returned from a tour through the greatest part of Europe, particularly through the whole of Spain and Portugal, between whom there then was an appearance of approaching war. I was about to retire to a small patrimony I had received from my ancestors, in order to embrace a life of study and reflection, when chance threw me unexpectedly into a very short and desultory conversation with Lord Chatham. A few days afterwards, Mr. Wood, then under-

secretary of state, informed me that Lord Chatham intended to employ me upon a particular service. No time was lost on my side ; but, just after my receiving orders to return to London, his Lordship resigned office.

Seven or eight months were passed in an expensive and fruitless attendance in London, when Lord Halifax was pleased not only to propose, but to plan for me, a journey of considerable importance. His Lordship said that nothing could be more ignoble than that, at such a time of life, at the height of my reading, health, and activity, I should, as it were, turn peasant, and voluntarily bury myself in obscurity and idleness. He observed that the coast of Barbary, which might be said to be just at our door, was as yet but partially explored. No details had been given to the public of the large and magnificent remains of ruined architecture which travellers vouched to have seen in great quantities, and of exquisite elegance and perfection, all over the country. He wished, therefore, that I should be the first, in the reign just beginning, to set an example of making large additions to the royal collection, and he pledged himself to be my supporter and patron, and to make good to me the promises which had been held forth to me by former ministers, for other services.

The discovery of the Source of the Nile was also a subject of these conversations, but it was always mentioned to me with a kind of diffidence, as if to be expected from a more experienced traveller. Whether this was but another way of exciting me to the attempt, I shall not say ; but my heart in that instant did me justice to suggest that this, too, was either to be achieved by me, or to remain, as it had done these last two thousand years, a snare to all travellers, and an opprobrium to geography.

Fortune seemed to enter into this scheme. The consulship of Algiers becoming vacant, Lord Halifax pressed me to accept of it, as containing all sorts of conveniences for making the proposed expedition. This favourable event finally determined me. I had all my life applied unweariedly, with perhaps more love than talent, to drawing and mathematics, especially that part necessary to astronomy. The transit of Venus was at hand, and it would be visible at Algiers. I furnished myself with a large apparatus of instruments, the completest of their kind for the observation. It was a pleasure to know that, from my own house at Algiers, I could deliberately take measures to place myself in the list of men of science of all nations, who were then preparing for the same purpose. I also took with me a large camera obscura, constructed upon my own principles.

Thus prepared, I set out for Italy, through France. On my arrival at Rome I received orders to proceed to Naples, there to await his Majesty's further commands. After remaining there for some time, I returned to Rome, and thence proceeded to Leghorn, where I embarked on board the Montreal man-of-war for Algiers.

I was now engaged, and part of my pride was to show how easy a thing it was to disappoint the idle prophecies of the ignorant, that this expedition would be spent in pleasure, without any profit to the public. I wrote to several correspondents to procure for me a number of assistants. These gentlemen kindly used their utmost endeavours, but in vain. At last one of them by accident heard of a young man who was then studying architecture at Rome, a native of Bologna, whose name was Luigi Balugani. He knew very little when first sent to me ;

length in this volume. Taking up the thread of Bruce's history where he himself drops it, we have now to follow it to the end.

On landing at Marseilles, Bruce was met with the hearty congratulations of the Comte de Buffon, M. Guys, and many other gentlemen who had taken a particular interest in his travels. For about a month after his arrival he endured great agony from the guinea-worm. When his health was in some measure restored, he set out for Paris in company with his friend the Comte de Buffon. The reception he met with was of the most flattering description. Everywhere his travels were the subject of conversation ; and his company was courted by persons of the first distinction. His health being still delicate, he set out for Italy, where he resided for some time. At Bologna and Rome he was the object of much attention. It is believed that, in the latter city, he was admitted, heretic though he was, to an audience with Pope Clement XIV., the celebrated Ganganelli, who presented him with a series of gold medals relating to several transactions of his pontificate. In the spring of 1774 Bruce returned to France, but it was not till the middle of June that he came to England, from which he had now been absent twelve years. Soon after his arrival he was introduced to George III., who honoured with his approbation Bruce's great exertions in the cause of geographical discovery, and accepted his drawings of Baalbec, Palmyra, and the African cities. In the autumn Bruce went to Scotland, where he received a cordial welcome both in Edinburgh and in his native county.

The curiosity of the public regarding his travels was very

great, and Bruce had in the frankest manner communicated to such persons as had the opportunity of making his acquaintance many particulars regarding the strange countries he had visited. "Truth is strange, stranger than fiction." When people heard of a nation that ate flesh reeking from the living animal ; of women wearing rings in their noses and their lips, and using the entrails of oxen for a head-dress ; of girls of ten years of age being mothers ; of banquets at which the gross sensuality which in civilized countries is only indulged in secret, was openly and shamelessly practised ; of a little fly that forced whole tribes of men periodically to migrate to the sands, and the buzz of whose wings made even the camel, "the ship of the desert," go mad with terror ; and, to instance no other marvels, of himself, a friendless traveller, rising high in the graces of the king of Abyssinia, and being appointed to offices of great dignity—the truth appeared to them so strange, and it was so different from their notions of the fitnesses and proprieties of things, that they were easily persuaded by the whisper of calumny to set it down as fiction. Some even went so far as to assert that he had never been in Abyssinia at all !\* Bruce had the benefit of the opinions of many of the critics upon his travels long before they were written ; and it was well for him that he had. He fortified himself in his own proud sense of integrity against the malignant attacks of the envious and the ignorant. Knowing well the reception which his book would meet with from a certain class of critics, and resolved never to stoop to notice them, he took

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the opportunity of the publication of his *Travels* to express for the whole herd of them his unmitigated scorn and contempt. He thus by anticipation gave to the attacks made upon his work, and upon his own character through it, the only reply which a man of honour and high spirit could condescend to give ; and, having done that, he was willing to wait for the justice which never fails to come at last, though it may be sometimes too late. "What I have written," says he, "I have written. My readers have before them, in the present volumes, all that I shall ever say, directly or indirectly, upon the subject ; and I do, without one moment's anxiety, trust my defence to an impartial, well-informed, and judicious public."

Bruce's *Travels* did not appear till the year 1790, seventeen years after his return to Europe. In 1776 he had married Mary Dundas, daughter of Thomas Dundas, Esq. of Fingask, by whom he had three children, two sons and a daughter. On the death of this amiable lady in 1785, his friends urged him, as a means of diverting his melancholy, to set to work to prepare his *Travels* for publication, and he complied. The book was eagerly expected both by friends and foes. It appeared in 1790, in five large quarto volumes, with the title—"Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile, in the years 1768, 1769, 1770, 1771, 1772, and 1773. In five volumes. By James Bruce of Kinnaird, Esq., F.R.S."\*

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heart was strong, but strength was failing, by my being involuntarily twisted about and struck on the face and breast by the ebbing wave. It now seemed as if nothing remained but to give up the struggle, and resign myself to my destiny. Before I did this, I sank, to try if I could touch the ground, and found that I reached the sand with my feet, though the water was still rather deeper than my mouth. The success of this experiment infused into me the strength of ten men, and I strove manfully, taking advantage of floating only with the influx of the wave, and preserving my strength for the struggle against the ebb, which, by sinking and touching the ground, I now made more easy. At last, finding my hands and knees upon the sand, I fixed my nails into it, and obstinately resisted being carried back at all, crawling a few feet when the sea had retired. I had perfectly lost my recollection and understanding; and, after creeping so far as to be out of the reach of the sea, I suppose I fainted, for from that time I was totally insensible of anything that passed around me.

In the meantime the Arabs, who live two miles from the shore, came down in crowds to plunder the vessel. One of the boats was thrown ashore, and they had belonging to them some others. All the people were now taken on shore, those only being lost who had perished in the boat. What first awakened me from my trance was a blow with the butt-end of a lance, shod with iron, upon the juncture of the neck with the back-bone. This produced a violent sensation of pain; but it was a mere accident the blow was not with the point, for the small short waistcoat, which had been made at Algiers, the sash, and drawers, all in the Turkish fashion, made the Arabs believe that I was a Turk; and after many blows, kicks, and curses, they stripped

me of the little clothing I had, and left me naked. They used the rest in the same manner, and then went to look for the bodies of those who had been drowned.

After the discipline I had received, I walked or crawled up among some white sandy hillocks, where I sat down and concealed myself as well as possible. The weather was then warm, but the evening promised to be cooler, and it was fast drawing on. There was danger to be apprehended if I approached the tents while I was naked, for in this case it was very probable I should receive a bastinado worse than the first. I was so confused that I had not recollected I could speak to them in their own language, and it only now came into my mind that by the gibberish, in imitation of Turkish, which the Arab had uttered while he was beating and stripping me, he took me for a Turk, and to this, in all probability, the ill usage was owing.

An old man and a number of young Arabs came up to me ; I gave them the salute—*Salam Alicum* !—which was only returned by one young man, in a tone as if he wondered at my impudence. The old man then asked me whether I was a Turk, and what I had to do there ? I replied that I was no Turk, but a poor Christian physician, a dervish that went about the world seeking to do good for God's sake ; that I was then flying from famine, and going to Greece to get bread, and had lost everything I had in the shipwreck of that vessel. I said this in so despairing a tone, that there was no doubt left with the Arab that I spoke the truth. A ragged, dirty baracan was immediately thrown over me, and I was ordered up to a tent, in the end of which stood a long spear thrust through it, as a mark of sovereignty. I there saw the Shekh of the tribe, who, being at peace with the Bey of Bengazi, and also with the Shekh

of Ptolometa, after many questions, ordered me a plentiful supper, of which all my servants partook, none of them having perished. After we had stayed here two days, the Shekh, having restored to us all that had been taken from us, sent us on camels to Bengazi. In this shipwreck I lost many valuable instruments, drawings, and manuscripts, which were never recovered.

I found at Bengazi a small French sloop, bound for Canea, a fortified place in Crete. Embarking in it, I landed at Canea, after a prosperous voyage of four or five days. There I was seized with a dangerous illness, occasioned by my exertions in the sea of Ptolometa, and the beating I had received. From Canea I sailed for Rhodes, and there met my books. I then proceeded to Castelrosso, on the coast of Caramania ; but, my illness increasing, it was impossible for me to explore the magnificent remains which, I was credibly informed, are to be seen in that region.

From letters which I received shortly after this from Paris and London, I learned, to my great mortification, that no accounts of me had arrived from Africa, unless from several idle letters, written by a gentleman whose name I abstain from mentioning ; first, because he is dead, and next, out of respect to his truly great and worthy relatives. In these letters it was announced that I was gone with a Russian caravan through Curdistan, where I was to observe the transit of Venus in a place where it was not visible, and that I was to proceed to China, and return by the way of the East Indies—a story which some of his correspondents, as profligate as himself, industriously circulated at the time, and which others have affected to believe to this day. I conceived a violent indignation at this ; and finding myself thus treated for so complete a journey as I had then actually ter-

minated, thought it below me to sacrifice the best years of my life to daily pain and danger, when the impression it made in the breasts of my countrymen seemed to be so weak, so infinitely unworthy of them or me. One thing alone detained me from returning home—the desire of fulfilling my promise to my Sovereign, and of adding the ruins of Palmyra to those of Africa, already secured and out of danger. In my anger I renounced all thoughts of the attempt to discover the sources of the Nile, and I repeated no more the orders which I had been previously sending home, for either quadrant, telescope, or time-keeper. I had pencils and paper; and, luckily, my large camera obscura, which had escaped the catastrophe of Ptolometa, had arrived from Smyrna. I therefore began to cast about for the means of safely accomplishing the famous journey to Palmyra. Accordingly, I went to Tripoli, in Syria, where I was hospitably received by the British Consul.

From Tripoli I set out for Hamath, where I found an Arab guide awaiting me, and proceeded to Hassia. The Orontes, which passes through the plains, was so much swollen with rains that the ford was no longer visible. Stopping at two miserable huts, inhabited by a base set called Turcomans, I asked the master of one of them to show me the ford, which he very readily undertook to do. I went, for the length of some yards, on rough, but very hard and solid ground. The current before me was, however, so violent, that I had more than once a desire to turn back; but not suspecting anything, I proceeded, when, on a sudden, man and horse fell out of their depth into the river. I and my horse swam separately to shore. At a small distance was a caphar, or turnpike, the keeper of which told me that the place where I had crossed was the site of an old bridge, and that I



had entered on one of its wings, and dropped into the deep part of the river at the broken arch. The people who misguided me, he said, were an infamous set of banditti ; and I might be thankful that I had made such an escape from them. The capharman then showed my servants the right ford.

From Hassia we proceeded to Cariateen ; and thence we passed the desert to Palmyra in a day and two nights. Just before we came in sight of the ruins, we ascended a hill of white, gritty stone, from the top of which there opened before us the most astonishing, stupendous sight that perhaps ever appeared to mortal eyes. The whole plain below, which was very extensive, was covered so thickly with magnificent buildings that one seemed to touch another, all of fine proportions, all of agreeable forms, all composed of white stone, which at that distance appeared like marble. At the end of it stood the Palace of the Sun, a building worthy to close so magnificent a scene.

After taking very large and careful views of the ruins of Palmyra, I proceeded to Baalbec, distant about 130 miles. Baalbec is pleasantly situated in a plain on the west of Anti-Libanus, and abounds in gardens. The interior of the great temple of the Sun here surpasses anything at Palmyra, indeed any sculpture I ever remember to have seen in stone. All these views of Palmyra and Baalbec are now in the King's collection. They are the most magnificent offering in their line that ever was made by one subject to his sovereign.

Passing by Tyre, from curiosity only, I came to be a mournful witness of the truth of that prophecy, that Tyre, the queen of nations, should be a rock for fishers to dry their nets on.\* Two wretched fishermen, with miserable nets, having just given

\* Ezek. xxvi. 3-5, 14, 21.

over their occupation with very little success, I engaged them, at the expense of their nets, to drag in those places where they said shell-fish might be caught, in hopes to have brought out one of the famous purple fish ; but in this I did not succeed. Much fatigued, but satisfied beyond measure with what I had seen, I arrived at Sidon.

As I had already seen the greater part of the good architecture in the world, in its various degrees of excellence, it now only remained for me to see it in its origin ; and for this it was necessary to go to Egypt. Having examined the architecture of Egypt, I proposed to retire to my native patrimony, with a fair stock of unexceptionable materials upon this subject to serve for a pleasant and useful amusement in my old age.

I now received, however, a letter by way of Alexandria, which, if it did not overturn, at least shook these resolutions. The Comte de Buffon had ventured to state to the King of France, Louis XV., how very much it was to be lamented, that, after a man had been found who was likely to succeed in removing that opprobrium of travellers and geographers, by discovering the sources of the Nile, one most unlucky accident, at a most unlucky time, should frustrate the most promising endeavours. I had at length procured telescopes and other instruments, through the exertions of my friends ; but, without waiting for an indefinite time, I despaired of obtaining a quadrant that could be depended on. That prince, distinguished for every good quality of heart, and for a desire of promoting and protecting learning, ordered a movable quadrant, of his own military academy at Marseilles, to be taken down and sent to me at Alexandria.

At the same time I received a letter from my friend Mr.

Russel, which informed me that astronomers had begun to cool in their expectations of the results of an observation of the transit of Venus, and that they now ardently wished me to undertake a journey into Abyssinia. A letter from my correspondent at Alexandria also acquainted me that the quadrant and all other instruments were in that city.

What followed is the voyage itself, the subject of the present publication.



## CHAPTER II.

*First Sight of Alexandria—Its Antiquities—Journey to Cairo—  
Interviews with the Bey—I sail up the Nile—Ruins of Memphis  
—Antinopolis—Magnificent Ruins at Dendera—Adventure  
with a Saint—Sepulchres of Thebes—The Arabs Ababdé solemnly  
promise to protect me—Cataract of Syene—Interview with the  
Aga—Return to Kenné.*

ON Saturday, the 15th of June 1768, I sailed from Sidon, once the richest and most powerful city in the world, though now there is not remaining a shadow of its ancient grandeur. On the 20th of June, early in the morning, we had a distant prospect of Alexandria rising from the sea. It is from this point of view that the city appears to most advantage, with its old monuments, such as the Column of Pompey, and the high Moorish towers and steeples. But the moment we are in the port the illusion ends, and we distinguish the immense works of ancient times, now few in number, from the ill-imagined and imperfect buildings of the several barbarous masters of Alexandria in later ages.

Alexander the Great, returning to Egypt from the Libyan side, was struck with the beauty and situation of the two ports here. Dinocrates, an architect who accompanied him, traced out the plan, and Ptolemy I. built the city. The healthy, though desolate and bare country around it, part of the desert of Libya, was another inducement to prefer this situation to the unwhole-

some black mud of Egypt. But it had no water ; and this Ptolemy was obliged to bring from the Nile by a calish or canal, commonly called the Canal of Cleopatra, though it was certainly coeval with the foundation of the city.

Pompey's Pillar, the obelisks, and subterraneous cisterns, are all the antiquities we find now in Alexandria ; these have been described frequently, ably, and minutely. The pillar is of granite, but the capital is of another stone. It appears to belong to the period between Hadrian and Severus, and may probably be a monument of the gratitude of the city of Alexandria to the latter of these emperors, for the benefits he conferred upon it.

Alexandria has often changed masters since the time of Cæsar. It was at last destroyed by the Venetians and Cypriots, after the release of St. Lewis ; and we may say of this ancient city, as of Carthage, that its very ruins have perished. Cleopatra, were she to return to life again, would scarcely know where her palace was situated in this her own capital.

There is nothing beautiful or pleasant in the present Alexandria but a handsome street of modern houses, where some very active and intelligent merchants live upon the miserable remnants of that trade which once made it so famous. It is thinly inhabited, and there is a tradition among the natives that more than once it has been in agitation to abandon it altogether, and retire to Rosetta or Cairo, but that they have been withheld by the opinion of divers saints from Arabia, who have assured them that, Mecca being destroyed (as they think it must be by the Russians), Alexandria is then to become the *holy place*, and Mahomet's body is to be transported thither. When that city is destroyed, the sanctified relics are to be transported

to Cairouan in Tunis ; lastly, from Cairouan they are to come to Rosetta, and there to remain till the consummation of all things, which is not then to be at a great distance.

With very great pleasure I had received my instruments at Alexandria. I examined them, and, by the perfect state in which they arrived, knew the obligations I was under to my correspondents and friends. Prepared now for any enterprise, I left with eagerness the threadbare inquiries into the meagre remains of this once famous capital of Egypt.

From Alexandria to Medea, where there is a ferry over a branch of the Nile, there was nothing of interest. We saw no vegetables, except some scattered roots of absinthium. We observed two or three gazelles or antelopes, walking one by one, at several times, and the jerboa, another inhabitant of these deserts. At Medea the Delta is said to begin. From this place our road lay through very deep sand, to avoid which, and obtain firmer footing, we were obliged to ride up to the bellies of our horses in the sea. If the wind blows this quantity of dust or sand into the Mediterranean, it is no wonder the mouths of the branches of the Nile are choked up. Leaving the sea, heaps of stones and trunks of pillars guide you in your road, through moving sands, and conduct you safely to Rosetta.

Rosetta is a large, clean, neat town, upon the eastern side of the Nile. It is about three miles long, much frequented by studious Mahometans and merchants. There are many gardens and much verdure around the town ; the ground is low, and retains long the moisture it imbibes from the overflowing of the Nile. Rosetta has this good reputation, that the people are milder, more tractable, and less avaricious than those of Alexandria and Cairo ; but I must say that I could not discern much.

difference. We embarked on the Nile for Cairo in the end of June, and reached it without any mishap.

That part of Cairo where the French are settled is exceedingly commodious and fit for retirement. It consists of one long street, where all the merchants of that nation live together. It is shut at one end by large gates, where there is a guard, and these are kept constantly close in the time of the plague. At the other end is a large garden, tolerably kept, with pleasant walks and seats. All the enjoyment that Christians can hope for, among this vile people, consists in peace and quiet ; nobody seeks for more.

The government of Cairo is much praised by some ; but a more brutal, tyrannical, and avaricious set of miscreants than its members there is not on earth. It is said to consist of twenty-four beys ; but there were only seven when I was at Cairo, and one who commanded the whole. In time of peace, when beys are contented to be on an equality, and no ambitious one attempts to govern the whole, there is a number of inferior officers depending upon each of the beys, subject to them, but exercising unlimited jurisdiction over the people in the city, and appointing others to do the same over villages in the country. There are perhaps 400 persons in Cairo who have absolute power, and administer what they call justice in their own way, and according to their own views. Fortunately, in my time this many-headed monster was no more ; there was but one Ali Bey, and there was no jurisdiction exercised but by his officers. This happy state did not last long.

In order to be a bey, the person must have been a slave, and bought for money at a market. Every bey has a great number of servants, slaves to him as he was to others ; these

are his guards, and he promotes them to places in his household according as they are qualified. The highest of these slaves is the *hasnadar*, who governs the whole household, and, when his master dies, marries his wife, and inherits his dignity and fortune. Whatever number of children the bey may have, none of them ever succeed him.

The secretary of the Bey, whose name was Risk, professed astrology, and his master, like all other Turks, believed in it implicitly. To this folly the Bey sacrificed his own good understanding; and Risk led him from one wild scheme to another till he undid him—by the stars. The sight of my instruments, that had been opened at the custom-house, impressed Risk with an idea of my superior knowledge of astrology; and it was not long before he inquired of Bertran, the friend in whose house I stayed, as to my acquaintance with this science. My friend, who saw the drift of all this, so prepossessed him in favour of my superiority in astrology, that he at once communicated to him the great expectations he had formed, to be enabled by me to foresee the destiny of the Bey, the success of the war, and, in particular, whether or not he would make himself master of Mecca, to conquer which he was about to send an army under his slave and son-in-law.

Bertran communicated this to me with great tokens of joy. For my own part, I did not greatly like the profession of fortune-telling, in which the *bastinado* or impaling might be the reward of being mistaken; but I was told I had most credulous people to deal with, and that there was nothing for it but escaping as long as possible before the issue of any of my prophecies, and as soon as I had done my own business.

In a few days I received a letter from Risk, desiring me to



go to the convent of St. George, about three miles from Cairo, where an apartment was ordered for me. I was to wait there for the Bey's orders. At this convent, to my great joy, I met my old friend Father Christopher, who had risen to the dignity of Archimandrites, which is second under the Patriarch. He used his influence with the patriarch to procure me letters of recommendation to the Greeks who were in Abyssinia. Many of these Greeks occupied stations of the highest rank, and they held the patriarch in such respect, that obedience was paid to his commands as to those of holy writ.

One night, about nine o'clock, Risk sent for me to come to the Bey. I saw him then for the first time. He was sitting on a large sofa, covered with crimson cloth of gold; his turban, his girdle, and the head of his dagger, all thickly covered with fine brilliants. He entered abruptly into discourse upon the war between Russia and the Turk, and asked me if I had calculated what would be the result of that war. I said that the Turks would be beaten by sea and land wherever they presented themselves. Again he inquired whether Constantinople would be burned or taken? I replied, neither; but peace would be made, after much bloodshed, with little advantage to either party. He clapped his hands together, and swore an oath in Turkish, then turned to Risk and said, "That will be sad indeed; but truth is truth, and God is merciful!"

Two or three nights afterwards, the Bey sent for me again. It was near eleven o'clock before I got admittance to him. He was sitting, leaning forward, with a wax taper in one hand, reading a small slip of paper which he held close to his face. He did not seem to observe me till I was close upon him, and started when I said, "Salam." I told him I came upon his message.

He said, "I thank you ; did I send for you ?" and without giving me leave to reply, went on, "O, true ; I did so ;" and fell to reading his paper again. After this was over, he complained that he had been ill ; that he vomited immediately after dinner, though he ate moderately ; that his stomach was not yet settled ; and he was afraid something had been given him to do him mischief. I felt his pulse, which was low and weak, but very little feverish. I assured him that he was in no danger, and insinuated that I thought he had been guilty of some excess before dinner ; at which he smiled, and said to Risk, who was standing by : "Afrite ! afrite !" (He is a devil ! he is a devil !) I said, "If your stomach is really uneasy from what you have eaten, warm some water, and, if you please, put a little green tea into it, and drink it till it makes you vomit gently, and that will give you ease ; after which you may take a dish of strong coffee, and go to bed, or a glass of spirits, if you have any that are good." He looked surprised at this proposal, and said very calmly, "Spirits ! do you know I am a Mussulman ?" "But I, sir," replied I, "am none. I tell you what is good for your body, and have nothing to do with your religion or your soul." He seemed vastly diverted, and pleased with my frankness, and only said, "He speaks like a man." I went home very tired and peevish at being dragged out on so foolish an errand.

Next morning Risk came to me again. The Bey was still unwell ; and the idea yet remained that he had been poisoned. I asked how the water had operated. He had not taken any of it, as he did not know how to make it. Risk had come to me to learn this. I immediately showed him. But this was not all : he modestly insinuated that I was to drink it, and so vomit myself, in order to show him how to do with the Bey !

excused myself from being patient and physician at the same time, but offered to vomit *him*, which would answer the same purpose. The proposal was declined. Father Christopher coming in at this moment, we both agreed to vomit the father, who would not consent, but produced a young monk, and we forced *him* to take the water, whether he would or not!

As my favour with the Bey was now established by my midnight interviews, I desired Risk to procure for me peremptory letters of recommendation to Shekh Hamam, to the governor of Syene, Ibrim, and Deir, in Upper Egypt. I had also letters from Ali Bey to the Bey of Suez, to the Sherriffe of Mecca, to the Naybe of Massuah, and to the King of Sennaar, and his minister for the time being. Before leaving Cairo I visited the Pyramids of Geeza, the description of which is in everybody's hands.

On December 12th, I embarked on the Nile, on board a *canja*, a very commodious vessel, 100 feet from stem to stern, with two masts, and two monstrous sails. The wind at first being contrary, the boat had to be drawn up the stream by a rope. On the 13th we let out our vast sails, and passed a very considerable village called Turra, on the east side of the river. The Nile here is about a quarter of a mile broad. I left my boat at Shekh Atman, a small village on the other side of the river, and proceeded, accompanied by the Arabs, to look for the site of the ancient Memphis. We entered a thick wood of palm trees, in which we came to several large villages called Metrahenny. To the west of the palm-trees I found great mounds and heaps of rubbish, and the choked-up remains of a canal. We saw three large granite pillars to the south-west, and part of a broken cistern of granite, but no obelisks, or stones with hieroglyphics. These, our conductor said, were the ruins of

Mimf, the ancient seat of the Pharaohs. Many travellers place Memphis at Geeza, but I am convinced, from a careful consideration of the whole subject, that the preponderance of argument is on the side of Metrahenny.

The wind was fair and fresh when, in great spirits, we hoisted sail, and left the port of Metrahenny. After sailing about two miles, we saw three men fishing in a very extraordinary manner. They were on a raft of palm branches, supported on a float of clay jars, made fast together. The form of the raft was triangular, a man standing at each corner, throwing his net with surprising regularity. Our rais, thinking we wanted to buy fish, let go his mainsail, and ordered them on board. They were alongside of us in a moment, and one of them came on board, lashing his miserable raft to a rope at our stern. We gave them some large pieces of tobacco; in return for which they presented us with a basket of fish. They said their fishing was merely occasional, and in course of their trade, which was selling these earthen jars. After descending with the raft to Cairo, they sell the jars there, and carry home the produce in money or necessaries. A very poor trade, but sufficient, one way and another, to afford occupation to 2000 men.

On the 18th we saw the first plantations of sugar-canes. The next day we came to a village called Rhoda, whence we saw the magnificent ruins of the ancient city of Antinous. Unluckily I had neglected, when I left Cairo, to provide myself with letters of recommendation, to enable me to examine these remains. I told the rais that I must go ashore, and asked him if the people of this place, who, he said, were very bad Turks, very bad Moors, and very bad Christians, had no regard for saints. I imagined that if he would put on his red turban, it would then appear that

he was a saint; as he had before told me he was known to be all the world over. He did not seem to like the expedition, but hauled in sail, and made the vessel fast to a stake on the shore. While his son Mahomet and an Arab went on shore, under pretence of buying provisions, to see how the land lay, I examined the ruins as attentively as possible with the aid of a glass. Three columns of the angle of the portico were standing, fronting to the north; part of the tympanum, cornice, frieze, and architrave all entire, and very much ornamented; thick trees hid what was behind. The columns were of the largest size, and fluted; the capitals Corinthian, and to all appearance entire. They were of white Parian marble probably, but had lost the extreme whiteness or polish of the Antinous at Rome, and were changed to a yellowish colour. I saw, indistinctly, also, a triumphal arch in the same style.

Presently an uproar was heard, and Mahomet and the Moor came in sight, pursued by a rabble from the town, who fired three shots at us. I immediately fired a blunderbuss over their heads, when three or four of the nearest of them fell on their faces, and slid away among the bushes, on their bellies, like eels, and we saw no more of them.

On the 21st, in the morning, we came to Gawa, where is the second scene of ruins of Egyptian architecture, after leaving Cairo. I immediately went on shore, and found a small temple of three columns in front, with the capitals entire, and the columns in several pieces. They seemed, by that and their slight proportions, to be of the most modern of that species of building, but the whole were covered with hieroglyphics, the old story over again—the hawk and the serpent, the man sitting with the dog's head, with the perch, or measuring rod, in one hand, and globes

with wings, and leaves of the banana tree, in the other. I was very well pleased to see here, for the first time, two shepherd dogs lapping up the water from the stream, then lying down in it with great seeming leisure and satisfaction. It refuted the old fable, that the dogs living on the banks of the Nile run as they drink, for fear of the crocodile.

Next night we arrived at Achnim. Here there is a hospice or convent of Franciscans, for the entertainment of the converts or persecuted Christians in Nubia, *when they can find them*. They received us civilly, and that was just all. I think I never knew a number of priests met together who differed so little in capacity and knowledge, having barely a routine of scholastic disputation, and on every other subject inconceivably ignorant. These priests lived in great ease and safety, being protected and favoured by the Arab prince Hamam; and their acting as physicians reconciled them to the people. Achnim appears to be the Panopolis of the ancients, not only from its position, but from a triumphal arch near the convent, bearing a Greek inscription, "To the god Pan."

Passing Girgé, the largest town we had seen since we left Cairo, and a number of picturesque villages, we halted for the night at Beliani. Impatient to visit the greatest and most magnificent scene of ruins in Upper Egypt, we set out from Beliani, and about ten o'clock in the morning arrived at Dendera. We had letters from the Bey to the two principal men there, commanding them, as they would answer with their lives and fortunes, to have a special care that no mischief befel us; and likewise a very pressing letter to Shekh Hamam, at Furshout, in whose territory we were. I pitched my tent by the river side, and sent a message to the two principal people. On receiving my letters, they sent a horse and three asses to carry me to the ruins.

Dendera is a considerable town at this day, all covered with thick groves of palm trees, the same that Juvenal describes it to have been in his time. This place is governed by an cacheff, appointed by Shekh Hamam. A mile south of the town are the ruins of two temples, one of which is so much buried under ground that little of it is to be seen ; but the other, which is by far the most magnificent, is entire, and accessible on every side. It is also covered with hieroglyphics, both within and without, all in relief, and of every figure, simple and compound, that ever has been published, or called an hieroglyphic. The form of the building is an oblong square, the ends of which are occupied by two large apartments, or vestibules, supported by monstrous columns, all covered with hieroglyphics, finished with great care. The capitals are of one piece, and consist of four large human heads, placed back to back against one another, with bats' ears, and an ill-imagined, and worse executed, fold of drapery between them. Above these is a large oblong square block, still larger than the capitals, with four flat fronts, disposed like panels, that is, with a kind of square border round the edges, while the faces are covered with hieroglyphics. The building is of white stone, from the neighbouring mountains. The top of the temple is flat ; the spouts to carry off the water are monstrous heads of sphinxes ; the globes with wings, and the two serpents, with a kind of shield or breastplate between them, are here frequently repeated, such as we see them on the Carthaginian medals. The hieroglyphics have been painted over, and great part of the colouring yet remains upon the stones—red in all its shades, especially that dark dusky colour called Tyrian purple ; yellow, very fresh ; sky-blue (that is, near the blue of an eastern sky, several shades lighter than ours) ; green, of different shades : these are all the

colours preserved. It was no part, either of my plan or inclination, to enter into the details of this extraordinary architecture. Quantity and solidity are two important requisites, and they are seen here with a vengeance! It strikes and imposes on you at first sight, but the impressions are like those made by the size of mountains, which the mind does not retain for any considerable time after seeing them. I think a very ready hand might spend six months, from morning to night, before he could copy the hieroglyphics in the inside of the temple.

A little before we reached Dendera, we saw the first crocodile; afterwards we observed hundreds of them lying upon every island like herds of cattle. The inhabitants of Dendera, nevertheless, have no fear of them, as they let their beasts of every kind go into the river, and stand there for hours; and the girls and women that come to fetch water in jars, often stand up to their knees in the stream for a considerable time. None of them that ever I heard of had been bit by a crocodile.

As soon as our rais saw me enter my tent on my return from the ruins, he came with expressions of very great indignation. "What signifies it," says he, "that you are a friend to the Bey, have letters to everybody, and are at the door of Furshout, if yet here is a man that will take your boat from you?"

"Softly, softly, Hassan," I answered; "he may be in the right. If Ali Bey, Shekh Hamam, or anybody want a boat for public service, I must yield mine. Let us hear."

"Shekh Hamam and Ali Bey!" says he; "why, it is a fool, an idiot, and an ass; a fellow that goes begging about, and says he is a saint; but he is a natural fool—as much knave as fool, however: he is a thief—I know him to be a thief."

"If he is a saint," said I, "Hagi Hassan, as you are another,



known to be so all the world over, I don't see why I should interfere : saint against saint is a fair battle !”

“It is the *cadi*,” replies he, “and no one else.”

“Come, Hassan, and let us see this *cadi*,” said I, “if it is the *cadi*, it is not the fool—it may be the knave.”

He was sitting upon the ground on a carpet. I had no good opinion of him from his first appearance, but said *Salam alicum* boldly. This seemed to offend him, as he looked at me with great contempt, and gave me no answer, though he appeared a little disconcerted at my confidence.

“Are you the *Cafr*,” said he, “to whom that boat belongs ?”

“No, sir,” said I ; “it belongs to Hagi Hassan.”

“Do you think I call Hagi Hassan, who is a Sherriffe, *Cafr* ?”

“That depends on the measure of your prudence, of which as yet I am not able to judge.”

“Are you the *Christian* that was at the ruins in the morning ?”

“I was at the ruins in the morning, and *I am a Christian*.”

“I am going to Girgé,” said the *cadi*, “and this holy saint is with me ; and there is no boat but yours bound that way, for which reason I have promised to take him with me.”

By this time the *saint* had got into the boat, and sat forward ; he was an ill-favoured, low, sick-looking man, and seemed to be almost blind.

“You should not make rash promises,” said I to the *cadi*, “for this one you never can perform. I am not going to Girgé. Ali Bey, *whose slave you are*, gave me this boat, but told me I was not to ship either saints or *cadis*. There is my boat—go aboard if you dare ! And you, Hagi Hassan, let me see you lift

an oar, or loose a sail, either for the cadì or the saint, if I am not with them !”

I went to my tent, and the rais followed me. Reflecting that it is better to flatter fools than to fight them, I bade him give the saint half-a-crown, to induce him to abandon his journey to Girgé. The saint readily took his departure—for the night.

While we were striking our tent the next day, a great mob came down, but without the cadì. The fool, or saint, got into the boat with a yellow flag in his hand. While I overawed the crowd with a blunderbuss, Hagi Hassan loosed the vessel from its moorings, and, the wind being favourable, we made great way. The saint now began to show some apprehensions for his own safety. He asked Hagi Hassan if this was the way to Girgé, and had for answer, “Yes ; it is the fool’s way !”

We carried him a mile or more up the river ; then, a convenient landing-place offering, I asked him whether he got my money or not last night. He said he had for yesterday, but he had got none for to-day. “Now, the next thing I have to ask you,” said I, “is, Will you go ashore of your own accord, or be thrown into the Nile ?” He answered with great confidence, “Do you know that, at my word, I can fix your boat to the bottom of the Nile, and make it grow a tree there for ever ?” “Aye,” says Hagi Hassan, “and make oranges and lemons grow on it likewise, can’t you ? You are a cheat ?” “Come, sirs,” said I, “lose no time, put him out.” I thought he had been blind, and weak ; but the boat was not within three feet of the shore when, placing one foot upon the gunnel, he leaped clean upon land. We slacked our vessel down the stream a few yards, filling our sails, and stretching away. Upon seeing this, our saint fell into a desperate passion, cursing and stamping with

his feet. Our people began to gibe him, asking him if he would have a pipe of tobacco to warm him, as the morning was very cold ; but I bade them be content. It was curious to see him, as far as we could discern, sometimes sitting down, sometimes jumping and skipping about, and waving his flag, then running about a hundred yards, as if after us, but always returning, though at a slower pace.

We arrived happily at Furshout that same afternoon, and went to the convent of Italian friars, where we were received more kindly than at Achnim. Furshout is in a large and cultivated plain. It is nine miles over to the foot of the mountains, all sown with wheat. There are, likewise, plantations of sugar-canes. The town has a large population. We waited upon the Shekh Hamam, a tall, handsome man, dressed in a large fox-skin pelisse, and wearing a yellow India shawl about his head, like a turban. He received me with great politeness and condescension, made me sit down by him, and asked me more about Cairo than about Europe.

We left Furshout on the 7th of January 1769, early in the morning. We had not hired our boat farther than this place ; but the good terms which subsisted between me and the saint, my rais, made an accommodation for going farther very easy. He now agreed for four pounds to carry us to Syene, and down again ; but, if he behaved well, he expected a trifling premium. "And if you behave ill, Hassan," said I, "what do you think you deserve?"—"To be hanged," said he ; "I deserve, and desire no better."

About four in the afternoon we arrived at El Gourni, a small village, with an ancient Egyptian temple. I think that this, and the two adjoining heaps of ruins, may have been part of ancient Thebes.

Nothing remains of Thebes but four prodigious temples, all of them in appearance more ancient, but neither so entire, nor so magnificent, as those of Dendera. The temples at Medinet Tabu are the most elegant of these. The hieroglyphics are cut to the depth of half a foot in some places, but we have still the same figures, or rather a less variety, than at Dendera. The hieroglyphics are of four sorts : first, such as have only the outline marked ; the second are hollowed, the figure rising in relief in the middle of the space, its prominent parts being on a level with the flat, unwrought surface of the stone, which thus preserves it from mutilation ; in the third, the figure is in relief, without any compartment cut round it for its defence ; the fourth are those already mentioned as cut very deep into the stone. All the hieroglyphics, except the last mentioned, are painted red, blue, and green.

About half a mile north of El Gourni are the magnificent, stupendous sepulchres of Thebes. The mountains of the Thebaid come close behind the town ; they are not run in upon one another like ridges, but stand insulated upon their bases, so that you can get round each of them. A hundred of these, it is said, are excavated into sepulchral, and a variety of other apartments. I went through seven of them with a great deal of fatigue. It is a solitary place ; and my guides, either from a natural impatience and distaste that these people have at such employments, or that their fears of the banditti that live in the caverns of the mountains were real, importuned me to return to the boat even before I had begun my search, or got into the mountains, where are the many large apartments of which I was in quest.

In one of these sepulchres we found three harps painted in fresco on the panels. They merited the utmost attention, whether

we consider their elegance of form, and the detail of their parts, or confine ourselves to the reflection that necessarily follows, to how great perfection music must have arrived before an artist could have produced so complete an instrument as either of these. As the first harp seemed to be the most perfect, and least spoiled, I immediately attached myself to this, and desired my clerk to take upon him the charge of the second. Both of these were taken very carefully and accurately. Upon seeing the preparations I was making to proceed farther in my researches, my conductors lost all subordination. They were afraid my intention was to sit in this cave all night (as it really was), and to visit the others next morning. With great clamour and marks of discontent, they dashed their torches against the largest harp, and made the best of their way out of the cave, leaving me and my people in the dark. There was no possibility of doing more. I offered them money, much beyond the utmost of their expectations ; but their fear of the banditti was stronger than their love of money. Very much vexed, I mounted my horse to return to the boat. In going through a narrow valley we heard a great deal of loud speaking on both sides, and some large stones were rolled down by the banditti, whom we could not see on account of the gathering darkness. I fired in the direction of the noise, and presently heard a loud howl, which seemed to have come from thirty or forty persons. I took my servant's blunderbuss, and discharged it where I heard the howl, when a violent confusion of tongues followed, but no more stones. Apprehensive that we might be attacked during the night in our boat, we took advantage of a favourable breeze about midnight, and were wafted up to Luxor.

We were well received by the governor, who furnished us with provisions, among them some lemons and sugar, which we

made use of to refresh ourselves with punch, in remembrance of Old England. Luxor, and Carnac, which is a mile and a quarter below it, are by far the largest and most magnificent scenes of ruins in Egypt—much more extensive and stupendous than those of Thebes and Dendera put together. At Luxor there are two obelisks of great beauty, and in good preservation; they are smaller than those at Rome, but not at all mutilated. At Carnac we saw the remains of two vast rows of sphinxes. The walls at both Luxor and Carnac have what seem to be historical engravings, representing men, chariots, horses, and battles.

Two days after leaving Luxor we reached Shekh Ammer, the encampment of the Arabs Ababdé. As this was a very considerable tribe, reaching from near Cossein (on the Red Sea) far into the desert, I thought it was worth while to put myself under their protection. Shekh Ammer is a collection of villages, composed of miserable huts, containing, at this time, about a thousand effective men, who possess few horses and are mostly mounted on camels. Ibrahim, the son of the Shekh, who had seen me at Furshout, and had received from me medicines for his father, who was labouring under a painful disorder, knew me as soon as I arrived; and, after acquainting his father, came with about a dozen naked attendants, armed with lances, to escort me. I was scarce got into the door of the tent, before a great dinner was brought, after their custom. We were then introduced to the Shekh, who was sick, and lying on a carpet in a corner of his tent. This chief of the Ababdé, called Nimmer (*the Tiger*), was a man about sixty years of age. In the friendly conversation which ensued, he often remarked how little they expected I would have visited them. As this implied, either that I paid no regard to my promise when given, or that I did

not esteem them of consequence enough to give myself the trouble, I thought it right to clear myself from these suspicions.

"Shekh Nimmer," said I, "this frequent repetition that you thought I would not keep my word, is grievous to me. I am a Christian, and have lived now many years among you Arabs. Why did you imagine that I would not keep my word, since it is a principle among all the Arabs I have lived with inviolably to keep theirs? After the proof of my humanity I have given, in sending the medicines that have eased you, what was there extraordinary in my coming to see you in the way? I knew you not before, but my religion teaches me to do good to all men, even to enemies, without reward, or without considering whether I ever should see them again. Now, after the drugs I sent you by Ibrahim, tell me, and tell me truly, upon the faith of an Arab, would your people, if they met me in the desert, do me any wrong, more than *now*, as I have eaten and drank with you to-day?"

The old man Nimmer on this rose from his carpet, and sat upright—a more ghastly and horrid figure I never saw. "No!" said he, "Shekh, cursed be those men of my people, or others, that ever shall lift up their hand against you, either in the desert or the tell.\* As long as you are in this country, or between this and Cosseir, my son shall serve you with heart and hand. One night of pain that your medicines freed me from would not be repaid if I were to follow you on foot to Messir.†

I then thought it a proper time to enter into conversation about penetrating into Abyssinia that way, and they discussed it among themselves in a very friendly and sagacious manner. "We could carry you safely to Suakem," says old Nimmer; "but

\* The part of Egypt which is cultivated.

† Cairo.

the Bishary are men not to be trusted. They would put you to death, and laugh at you all the time they were tormenting you. Now, if you want to visit Abyssinia, go by Cosseir and Jidda ; there you Christians command the country."

"All that is right, Shekh," said I ; "but suppose your people meet us in the desert, in going to Cosseir, how should we fare in that case ? Should we fight ?"

"I have told you, Shekh, already," replied he, "cursed be the man who lifts his hand against you, or even does not defend and befriend you, to his own loss, were it Ibrahim, my own son."

I then told him I was bound to Cosseir, and that, if I found myself in any difficulty, I hoped his people would protect me, and that he would give them the word that I was *Yagoubé*, a physician seeking no harm, but doing good ; bound by a vow, for a certain time, to wander through deserts, from fear of God, and that they should not have it in their power to do me harm.

The old man muttered something to his sons in a dialect I did not then understand ; and presently the hut was filled with priests and monks of their religion, and the heads of families. Joining hands, they repeated a prayer of about two minutes long, by which they declared themselves and their children accursed, if ever they lifted their hands against me in the tell, in the desert, or on the river, or if they did not protect me and mine, to the death of the last male child among them.

Medicines and advice being given on my part, faith and protection pledged on theirs, two bushels of wheat and seven sheep were carried down to the boat ; nor could we decline their kindness, as refusing a present in that country, however it is understood in ours, is just as great an affront as coming into the presence of a superior without any present at all.



Wishing to see the cataract of Syene, which is a few hours' journey above Shekh Ammer, we sailed, with a favourable wind, on the morning of the 20th. I was not well arrived at Syene, before a janissary came, in long Turkish clothes, without arms, and with a white wand in his hand, to tell me that this was a garrison town, and that the Aga was at the castle, ready to give me audience. I, however, thought proper to take two hours' rest before going to the Aga. The fort is built of clay, with some small guns mounted, strong enough to keep people of the country in awe. I found the Aga sitting in a small kiosk or closet, upon a stone bench covered with carpets. As I was in no fear of him, I was resolved to walk according to my privileges. I sat down upon a cushion below him, after laying my hand on my breast, and saying in an audible voice, with great marks of respect, however, "Salam alicum !" (Peace be between us) ; to which he answered, without any of the usual difficulty, "Alicum salam !" (There is peace between us.) After sitting down about two minutes, I again got up, and stood in the middle of the room before him, saying, "I am bearer of a *hatésherriffe* (or royal mandate) to you, Mahomet Aga !" and took the firman out of my bosom and presented it to him. Upon this he stood upright, and all the rest of the people, before sitting with him, likewise ; he bowed his head upon the carpet, then put the firman to his forehead, opened it, and pretended to read it ; but he knew well the contents, and I believe, besides, he could neither read nor write any language. I then gave him the other letters from Cairo, which he ordered his secretary to read in his ear.

All this ceremony being finished, he called for a pipe and coffee. I refused the first, as never using it ; but I drank a dish of coffee, and told him that I was bearer of a confidential message

from Ali Bey of Cairo, and wished to deliver it to him without witnesses, whenever he pleased. The room was accordingly cleared without delay. I told the Aga that, being a stranger, and not knowing the disposition of his people, or what footing they were on together, and being desired to address myself only to him by the Bey and our mutual friends at Cairo, I wished to put it in his power (as he pleased or not) to have witnesses of delivering the small present I had brought him from Cairo. The Aga seemed very sensible of this delicacy ; and particularly desired me to take no notice to my landlord, the Schourbatchie, of anything I had brought him.

All this being over, and a confidence established with government, I sent his present by his own servant that night, under pretence of desiring horses to go to the cataract next day. Next morning, at six, the Aga sent me his own horse, with mules and asses for my servants, to go to the cataract, which is about six miles distant. Passing out at the south gate of the town, we saw, a little to the left, a number of tombstones, with inscriptions in the Cufic character. On arriving at the cataract, I was surprised to find that vessels sail up it. The river, not half a mile broad, is divided into a number of small channels, by large blocks of granite from thirty to forty feet high. The chafing of the water against these huge obstacles, and the meeting of the contrary currents one with another, create such a violent ebullition, and make such a noise, as to fill the mind with confusion rather than terror.

We saw the miserable Kennouss, who inhabit the banks of the river up into Nubia, lying behind rocks, with lines in their hands, catching fish. They are not black, but of the darkest brown ; are not woolly-headed, but have hair. They are small,

light, agile people, and seem to be more than half-starved. I wanted to speak with them, but they ran off at full speed when I approached.

Having stayed for several days at Syene making observations, we embarked, on the 26th January, at the very spot where I again took boat about three years afterwards. We now no longer enjoyed the advantage of our prodigious main-sail; not only were our yards lowered, but our masts were taken out, and we floated down the current like a wreck. In the evening I stopped at Shekh Ammer, and saw my patient Nimmer, who was better, and as thankful as ever. On February 2, I reached Kenné, and took up my quarters at Badjoura, in a house which had formerly been assigned to me.

As I was now about to launch into that part of my expedition in which I was to have no further intercourse with Europe, I set to work to examine all my observations, and put my journal in such forwardness, that the labour and pains I had hitherto been at might not be totally lost to the public, if I should perish in the journey I had undertaken. Having finished these, at least so far as to make them intelligible to others, I conveyed them to my friends, Messrs. Julian and Rosa, at Cairo, to remain in their custody till I should return, or news come that I was otherwise disposed of.

## CHAPTER III.

*From Kenné to Cosseir—Across the Desert with a Caravan—Adventures on the way—Arrival at Cosseir—Interview with Hussein Bey—I meet again with the Arabs Ababdé—Excursion to the Mountain of Emeralds—A Storm in the Red Sea.*

IT was on Thursday, the 16th of February 1769, that we heard the caravan was ready to set out from Kenné, the *Cæne Emporium* of antiquity. During the day we passed several dirty villages of the Azaizy, a poor inconsiderable tribe of Arabs. They live by letting out their cattle for hire to the caravans, and attending themselves when necessary. The houses of the Azaizy are made of potter's-clay, in one piece, in the shape of a beehive; the largest is not above ten feet high, and six feet in diameter.

On the 17th, at eight o'clock in the morning, having mounted my servants on horseback, and taken charge of our own camels, for there was an indescribable confusion in the caravan, and our guards we knew were but a set of thieves, we advanced slowly into the desert. Our road was all the way in an open plain, bounded by hillocks of sand and fine gravel, perfectly hard, and not perceptibly above the level of the plain country of Egypt. About twelve miles distant there is a ridge of mountains, of no considerable height, perhaps the most barren in the world. Between these our road lay, through plains, never three miles

broad, but without trees, shrubs, or herbs. There are not even the traces of any living creature, neither serpent nor lizard, antelope nor ostrich, the usual inhabitants of the most dreary deserts. There is no sort of water on the surface, brackish or sweet. Even the birds seem to avoid the place as pestilential. The sun was burning hot, and, upon rubbing two sticks together, in half a minute they took fire and flamed—a mark how near the country was reduced to a general conflagration !

In the evening came twenty Turks from Caramania, all of them neatly and cleanly dressed, all on camels, armed with sword, pistols, and a short neat gun. A few of them spoke Arabic, and my Greek servant, Michael, interpreted for the rest. Having been informed that the large tent belonged to an Englishman, they came into it without ceremony. They told me they were going to Mecca, to the Hadje ; that they had been but indifferently used since they landed at Alexandria ; that they had been plundered of a portmanteau with about 200 sequins in gold, and the Bey of Girgé had given them no redress ; and that having heard that an Englishman was here, they had come to propose that we should make common cause to defend each other against all enemies. I cannot conceal the secret pleasure I had in finding the character of my country so firmly established among nations so distant, enemies to our religion, and strangers to our government. Turks from Mount Taurus, and Arabs from the desert of Libya, thought themselves unsafe among their own countrymen, but trusted their lives and their little fortunes implicitly to the direction and word of an Englishman, whom they had never before seen.

These Turks seemed to be above the middle rank. Each had his little cloth bag very neatly packed ; and they gave me

to understand that there was money in them. These they placed in my servants' tent, chaining them all together round the middle stake ; for it was easy to see that the Arabs of the caravan had these packages in view from the first moment of the arrival of the Turks.

Our journey now lay through a plain, the hills bordering which were of a brownish, calcined colour, like the stones on the sides of Mount Vesuvius, but without any herb or tree upon them. Passing some mountains of green and red marble, we entered a plain called Hamra, where we first observed the red sand. As we advanced, we were indemnified for the sameness of the aspect of the plain on the previous days ; for on each side we found different sorts of marble, twelve kinds of which I selected and took with me.

Encamping on the evening of the 21st, at Mesag el Terfowey, I went, under the guidance of my camel drivers, to some springs about five miles distant, in hopes of seeing some antelopes. I had not concealed myself half an hour before I saw, first one antelope walking very stately, alone ; then four others, closely following him. The leader advanced slowly, and with great caution, as if in fear ; but the others testified no apprehension, but were sporting or fighting with each other. As they were within reach, I fired at the foremost antelope, who leaped five or six feet into the air, and fell on his head, dead. I sent a shot after the others, killing one, and wounding another, which escaped. When we returned, near midnight, with our game and our water, we found the tents all lighted—an unusual thing at that time of night. Coming within a moderate distance of our tent we heard *the word* called for ; and I immediately answered, “Charlotte !” Upon our arrival we perceived the Turks parading

round the tents in arms. Presently there came a messenger from Sidi Hassan\* desiring me to come instantly to his tent. Perceiving that all was not well, I returned my compliments to Hassan, adding, that if he had anything to say to me so late, he would do well to come, or send, as it was past my hour of visiting in the desert.

I found that our slaves had caught an Arab, a servant of Sidi Hassan, trying to steal a portmanteau; and had thrashed him within an inch of his life. There were with me ten servants, all completely armed; twenty-five Turks, who seemed worthy to be depended on; and four janissaries, who had joined us from Cairo: so there was nothing that could reasonably alarm us. Five men with firelocks, and a number of Arabs with lances, now came forward, with a message from Sidi Hassan that my people had killed a man. They desired that the murderer might be delivered to them, and that I should come and see justice done. This I refused to do, stating that I rather expected Sidi Hassan to deliver up to me the companion of the thief, who had escaped. As it was near morning, I should meet him when the caravan decamped, and hear what he had to say.

At dawn of day the caravan was in motion. Intelligence had arrived that 300 Atouni, a tribe of Arabs from whom an attack on our caravan was dreaded, were in our near neighbourhood. We had agreed not to load one of our camels, but let the caravan go on before us, and meet the Atouni first. Hassan, who was on horseback, with about a hundred of his myrmidons, sent me word that I was to advance with only two servants. I answered that I had no intention to advance at all; if he had any business he should say so, and I would meet him, one to

\* Commander of the caravan, servant of Shekh Hamam.

one, or three to six, if he pleased. He asked for a cup of coffee, and, having drunk it, told me about the Atouni, suggesting that I and my people should go foremost, as we were better armed than his followers. I declined, saying, "You are commander of the caravan, and we have all sworn we will not fire a shot till we see you heartily engaged; and then we will do our best to hinder the Arabs from stealing the Sherriffe of Mecca's corn, for *his sake only*."

The caravan started, full of terror about the Atouni. Our way lay through a rocky defile. The scene was one of the most extraordinary I ever saw. The former mountains were of considerable height, without a tree or shrub or blade of grass upon them; but these now before us had all the appearance, the one of having been sprinkled over with Havannah, the other with Brazil snuff. About eight o'clock we began to descend, having mountains of green marble on each side of us. About ten, descending very rapidly, with green marble and jasper on each side of us, but no other green thing whatever, we had the first prospect of the Red Sea; and, at a quarter past eleven, we arrived at Cosseir. It has been a wonder with all travellers, and with myself among the rest, where the ancients procured that prodigious quantity of fine marble with which all their buildings abound. That wonder, however, among many others, now ceases, after having passed, in four days, more granite, porphyry, marble, and jasper, than would build Rome, Athens, Corinth, Syracuse, Memphis, Alexandria, and half-a dozen such cities.

Cosseir is a small mud-walled village, built upon the shore among hillocks of sand. It is defended by a square fort, with four small cannons, in very bad condition, of no use but to terrify the Arabs, and hinder them from plundering the town,



when full of corn going to Mecca. I had orders from Shekh Hamam to lodge in the castle ; but, a few hours before my arrival, Hussein Bey Abou Kersh landed from Mecca, and he had taken up the apartments which were destined for me. He was one of those beys whom Ali Bey had defeated and driven from Cairo. He was called *Abou Kersh*, Father Belly, from being immoderately fat ; his adversity had brought him a little into shape. Hussein Bey, on hearing that I had the firman of the Grand Seignior, and letters from the Bey of Cairo, ordered his Kaya, or next in command, to give up to me the apartments which he occupied. This I refused, as I had procured a house. In the evening I went to pay my respects to him, and, contrary to his expectations, took him a small present. Great intercourse of civility passed. The Turks, my fellow-travellers, who were all seated there, finding themselves in a condition to be heard, complained to Hussein Bey of the attempt of the Arab to rob them in the desert. The Bey asked me if it happened in my tent, and I answered that it was in that of my servants. "What is the reason," says he, "that when you English people know so well what good government is, you did not order his head to be struck off, when you had him in your hands, before the door of the tent ?" "Sir," said I, "I know well what good government is ; but, being a stranger and a Christian, I have no sort of title to exercise the power of life and death in this country ; only in this one case, when a man attempts my life, then I think I am warranted to defend myself, whatever may be the consequence to him. My men took the thief in the act, and they had my orders, in such cases, to beat the offenders so that they should not steal these two months again. They did so ; that was punishment enough, in cold blood." "But my blood," says he,

"never cools with regard to such rascals as these." "Go!" he called to one of his attendants, "tell Hassan, the head of the caravan, from me, that unless he hangs that Arab before sunrise to-morrow, I will carry him in irons to Furshout." On this I took my leave, saying only, "Hussein Bey, take my advice; procure a vessel and send these Turks over to Mecca before you leave this town, or be assured they will be made responsible for the death of this Arab." This was done, and the poor Turks joyfully embarked next morning. The thief was not hanged: he was sent out of the way, under pretence that he had fled.

The caravan from Syene arrived at this time, escorted by 400 Ababdé, all upon camels, each armed with two short javelins. The manner of their riding was very whimsical: they had two small saddles on each camel, and sat back to back—convenient for travelling, perhaps, but awkward in warfare, for, if they had to fight with us, one ball would thus kill two of them! The whole town was in terror at the influx of so many barbarians. I took the precaution to send all my instruments, my money, and the best of my baggage, to a chamber in the castle. I was next morning down at the shore, looking for shells, when one of my servants came to me in great fright. He told me the Ababdé had found out that Abdel Gin, my Arab, was an Atouni, their enemy; and that they had dragged him away to cut his throat. He very providentially brought me a horse, which I mounted immediately, and, in the fishing dress in which I was, with a red turban about my head, I galloped, as hard as the horse would carry me, through the town. About two miles from the town I came up with a crowd of Arabs. When I reached them six or eight of them surrounded me on horseback, and began to gabble in their own language. I was not very fond

of my situation. It would have cost them nothing to have thrust a lance through my back, and taken the horse away ; and, after stripping me, to have buried me in a hillock of sand, if they were so kind as give themselves that last trouble. However, I picked up courage, and, putting on the best appearance I could, said to them steadily, without trepidation, "What men are these before?" The answer, after some pause, was, "They are men ;" and they looked very queerly, as if they meant to ask each other, "What sort of a spark is this?" "Are those before us Ababdé?" I asked ; "are they from Shekh Ammer?" One of them nodded, and grunted sullenly, rather than said, "Aye, Ababdé, from Shekh Ammer." "Then, Salam alicum !" said I, "we are brethren. How does the Nimmer? Who commands you here? Where is Ibrahim?"

At the mention of Nimmer and Ibrahim, their countenances changed, not to anything sweeter or gentler than before, but to a look of great surprise. They had not returned my salutation, "Peace be between us ;" but one of them asked me who I was. "Tell me first," said I, "who is that you have before you?" "It is an Arab, our enemy," answered he, "guilty of our blood." "He is my servant," replied I, "a Howadat Arab ; his tribe lives in peace at the gates of Cairo, in the same manner that yours at Shekh Ammer does at those of Assouan. I ask you, where is Ibrahim, your Shekh's son?" "Ibrahim," says he, "is at our head ; he commands us here. But who are you?" "Come with me, and show me Ibrahim," said I, "and I will show you who I am."

I passed by these, and by another party of them. They had thrown a hair rope about the neck of Abdel Gin, who was almost strangled already, and cried out most miserably for me not to leave

him. I went directly to the black tent, which I saw had a long spear thrust up in the end of it, and met at the door Ibrahim and his brother, and seven or eight Ababdé. He did not recognise me ; but I dismounted close to the tent door, and had scarce taken hold of the pillar of the tent, and said, "Fiarduc !" (I am under your protection) when Ibrahim and his brother both knew me. "What !" said they, "Are you Yagoube, our physician, and our friend ?" "Let me ask *you*," replied I, "if you are the Ababdé of Shekh Ammer, that cursed yourselves and your children, if you ever lifted a hand against me or mine, in the desert, or in the ploughed field ? If you have repented of that oath, or sworn falsely on purpose to deceive me, here I am come to you in the desert." "What is the matter ?" says Ibrahim, "we are the Ababdé of Shekh Ammer ; there are no other ; and we still say, 'Cursed be he, whether our father or child, that lifts his hand against you in the desert or in the ploughed field.'" "Then," said I, "you are all accursed in the desert and in the field, for a number of your people are going to murder my servant. They took him, indeed, from my house in the town ; perhaps *that* is not included in your curse." I was very angry. "Whew !" says Ibrahim with a kind of whistle, "that is downright nonsense. Who are those of my people that have authority to murder and take prisoners, while I am here ? Here, one of you, get upon Yagoube's horse, and bring that man to me." Then, turning to me, he desired I would go into the tent and sit down. "For God renounce me and mine," says he, "if it is as you say, and one of them hath touched the hair of his head, if ever *he* drinks of the Nile again !"

Abdel Gin was the person that seized the servant of Hassan when he was trying to steal the Turk's portmanteau out of my

tent. I presently ascertained that, in order to revenge this, Hassan had told the Ababdé that Abdel Gin was an Atouni spy, that he had detected him in the caravan, and that he was come to learn the number of the Ababdé, in order to bring his companions to surprise them. He did not say one word about his being my servant, or my being at Cosseir; so the people thought they had a very meritorious sacrifice to make in the person of poor Abdel Gin.

All passed now in kindness; fresh medicines were asked for the Nimmer, great thankfulness expressed for what they had received, and a bountiful supply of food set before me. I cannot help here accusing myself of what, doubtless, may be well reputed a great sin. I was so enraged at the traitorous part acted by Hassan, that at parting I could not help saying to Ibrahim, "Now, Shekh, I have done everything you have desired, without even expecting fee or reward. The only thing I now ask, and it is probably the last, is, that you revenge me upon this Hassan, who is every day in your power." Upon this he gave me his hand, saying, "He shall not die in his bed, or I shall never see old age."

I got the twenty-four Turks embarked in a vessel going to Yambo, which I promised to hire on its return, as I had then formed a resolution to make a survey of the Red Sea, to the Straits of Babelmandeb. The captain, who, like my former rais, was a great saint, assured us that any rock that stood in the way of his vessel would either jump aside, or become soft like a sponge. All was settled to our mutual satisfaction, when, unluckily, the Turks, going down to their boat, met Sidi Hassan, whom, with reason, they thought the author of all their misfortunes. The whole twenty-four drew their swords, and would have cut Sidi Hassan in pieces, but, fortunately for him, the Turks had great

cloth trousers, and could not run, whilst he ran very nimbly in his. Several pistols, however, were fired, one of which shot him in the back part of the ear, on which he fled for refuge to the Bey, and we never saw him more.

I now took up my quarters in the castle, and, as the Ababdé had told strange stories about the Mountain of Emeralds, I determined, till my captain should return, to make a voyage thither. I sailed on the 14th of March, in the best boat then in the harbour. It had one sail, like a straw matrass, made of the leaves of a kind of palm tree ; and its planks, instead of being nailed, were sewn together. From an absolute detestation of her whole construction, I insisted upon keeping close along shore, at an easy sail. On the 16th, at day-break, we landed on a desert point, within sight of the Jibbel Zumrud, or mountains of emerald. After a walk of three miles, we reached the foot of the mountains. I asked my guide the name of that place ; he said it was Saiel. They are never at a loss for a name, and those who do not understand the language always believe them. Saiel means a male acacia tree (he saw one growing there), and with equal reason he might have called every mile Saiel, from the Gulf of Suez to the line. At the foot of the mountains are five pits or shafts, from which the ancients are said to have drawn the emeralds. We were not provided with materials, and little endowed with inclination, to descend into any one of them. I picked up some fragments of that brittle green crystal, which is perhaps the zumrud, the smaragdus described by Pliny, but by no means the emerald known since the discovery of the new world, the true Peruvian emerald being equal in hardness to the ruby. Before re-embarking, I picked up some very fine shells, corals, and other objects of natural history. Next day we reached the small

island of Jibbel Macowar, and the following morning we came to a rugged isle, to which, as it had no name, I took the liberty of giving my own, in memory of my visit to it. Here the fears of our pilot became so great, that we had to put about on our return to Cosseir. The apprehensions of the pilot were soon realised. A violent hurricane burst upon us, and the vessel went before it at a prodigious rate. The mainsail could not be lowered, the yard being fixed to the mast-head. On my attempting to reef it, by hauling it up like a curtain, the vessel pitched in such a way that I thought she was to be buried under the waves. I begged the rais to be steady, persuading him to take a glass of spirits, and desired him not to dispute or doubt anything I should do or order. He answered me nothing, but that Mahomet was the prophet of God. "Let him prophesy," said I, "as long as he pleases, but keep you steady to the helm, and steer straight before the wind, for I am resolved to cut that main-sail to pieces, and prevent the mast from going away, and your vessel from sinking to the bottom." I got no answer, except something about the mercy and the merits of Sidi Ali el Genowi. I now became violently angry. "You beast," said I, "cannot you give me a rational answer? Stand to your helm—look at the vane; keep the vessel straight before the wind, or I will shoot you dead." He answered only, "Maloom" (very well). All this was sooner done than said. I got the mainsail in my arms, and, with a great knife cut it all to shreds. This eased the vessel greatly, though we were still going at a prodigious rate. About two o'clock the wind seemed to fail, but half an hour after, it was more violent than ever. At three it fell calm, and before sunset we were safe at Cosseir.

## CHAPTER IV.

*From Cosseir to Massuah—Proceedings at Yambo—Hospitable treatment at Jidda—Excursion down the Gulf from Loheia—Departure from Loheia—Adventure with a Ghost—Island of Dahalac—Arrival at Masuah.*

ON the 5th of April, we set sail from Cosseir in the vessel previously engaged, belonging to Sidi Ali el Meymoun, which signifies "Ali the ape or monkey." For, though the rais was a saint, yet being in figure liker a monkey, it was thought proper to distinguish him by that to which he bore the greatest resemblance. The rais had four stout men on board, apparently good sailors; he himself, though near sixty, was a very active, vigorous little man, and to the full as good a sailor as he was a saint. On the 9th we arrived at Tor, a small straggling village, with a convent of Greek monks. From this place we have a distinct view of the summits of the mountains Horeb and Sinai rising above the intervening hills. Their tops are often covered with snow in winter.

Our rais, having despatched his business, was eager to depart; and, accordingly, on the 11th of April, at daybreak, we stood out of the harbour of Tor. I landed on the 14th, at a place called Jibbel Shekh, to see if I could procure any game. As I lay among the grass, watching two antelopes, I heard behind me something like a person breathing, on which I turned



about, and, not without great surprise and some little fear, saw a man standing just over me. I started up, while the man, who had a little stick only in his hand, retreated a few steps. He was almost naked, having only a coarse cloth round his middle, with a crooked knife stuck in it. I asked him who he was. He said he was an Arab belonging to Shekh Abd el Macaber. His master was at the hill a little above, with camels that were going to Yambo. He asked, in his turn, who I was. I told him I was an Abyssinian slave of the Sherriffe of Mecca, going to Cairo by sea, and that I wished much to speak to his master, if he would go and bring him. The savage went away with great willingness; and he no sooner disappeared, than I set out as quickly as possible for the boat, and we got her hauled out beyond the shoals, where we passed the night. About fifty men afterwards appeared, and made signs to us, but we were perfectly content with the distance that was between us, and sought no more to kill antelopes in the neighbourhood of Sidi Abd el Macaber.

On the 16th we reached Yambo, an ancient city, now dwindled into a paltry village. There is a castle here, built by Sinan Basha, at the time when, after the conquest of Egypt by Sultan Selim, it became a valuable station for warlike stores and wheat. This castle is occupied by 200 janissaries, the descendants of those brought hither by Sinan Basha. The inhabitants of Yambo are deservedly reckoned the most barbarous of any upon the Red Sea, and the janissaries keep pace with them in every kind of malice and violence. We did not go ashore all that day, because we had heard a number of shots, and had received intelligence from shore that the janissaries and townspeople had been fighting together for a week past. I was very

unwilling to interfere, wishing that they might have all leisure to extirpate one another if possible ; and my rais seemed most heartily to join in my wishes.

In the evening the captain of the port came on board, with two janissaries. Their first demand was gunpowder, which I positively refused. They insisted on bringing the vessel into the port ; but I told them that, having no business at Yambo, I was at liberty to put to sea, without coming ashore at all ; therefore, if they did not leave us, as the wind was favourable, I would sail, and, by force, carry them to Jidda ! After a great deal of blustering, and a thousand questions which I did not condescend to answer, they withdrew. When they went away, I begged the captain to make my compliments to his masters, Hassan and Hussein, Agas, to know what time I should wait upon them to-morrow. I had a message from the Agas the same night, and was assured that the town was tranquil, the janissaries and townsfolks having made up their differences.

Next morning I went to the palace. The two Agas were sitting on a high bench, upon Persian carpets ; and about forty well-dressed and well-looking men, many of them old, sat on carpets on the floor, in a semicircle round them. They behaved with great politeness, asking no questions but general ones. When I was going away, the younger of the Agas inquired, with a seeming degree of diffidence, whether Mahomet Bey Abou Dahab was ready to march. I answered, "I know not if he is ready ; he has made great preparations." The other Aga said, "I hope you will be a messenger of peace ?" I answered, "I entreat you to ask me no questions ; I hope, by the grace of God, all will go well." Every person present applauded the speech, and agreed to respect my secrets, for they supposed I had one.

They thought I was in the confidence of Ali Bey, and that his hostile designs against Mecca were laid aside. Immediately a very good house was provided for me by the Aga, and a man of his sent to show me to it.

I learned, very shortly after my arrival here, that the two young men (the governors) were slaves of the Sherriffe of Mecca, and were both very base and profligate. They would have robbed us all of the last farthing, if they had not been restrained by fear. I was not a little uneasy at thinking among what banditti I lived. A fit of drunkenness, or a piece of bad news, such as a report of the death of Ali Bey, might remove the fear which alone restrained them from robbing and murdering me.

After many delays, I sailed on the 28th of April, with a cargo of wheat that did not belong to me, and three passengers instead of one, for whom only I had undertaken. Nothing of interest occurred in our voyage to Jidda, which we reached on the afternoon of May 3d. Immediately on our anchoring, the officers of the custom-house took possession of our baggage.

The port of Jidda is a very extensive one, consisting of numberless shoals, small islands, and sunken rocks, with channels of deep water between them. You are very safe in Jidda harbour, whatever wind blows ; the danger of being lost, I conceive, lies in the going into, and coming out of, the harbour.

From Yambo to Jidda I had slept little, making my memorandum as full upon the spot as possible. I had, besides, an aguish disorder, which very much troubled me ; and, in dress and cleanliness was so like a *galiongy*, or Turkish seaman, that the Emir Bahar (captain of the port) was astonished at hearing my servants say I was an Englishman, at the time they carried *all my baggage* and instruments to the custom-house. He sent

his servant, however, with me to the Bengal House, who promised me, in broken English, a very magnificent reception from my countrymen. Upon his naming all the captains for my choice, I desired to be carried to a Scotchman, a relative of my own, who was then accidentally leaning over the rail of the staircase leading up to his apartments. I saluted him by his name ; he fell into a violent rage, calling me "villain, thief, cheat, and renegado rascal ;" and declared, if I offered to proceed a step farther, he would throw me over the stairs. I went away without reply, followed by his curses and abuse. The servant, my conductor, screwed his mouth and shrugged his shoulders. "Never fear," says he, "I will carry you to the best of them all." We went up an opposite staircase, I thinking within myself, "If those are their Indian manners, I shall keep my name and situation to myself while I am at Jidda." I stood in no need of them, as I had a credit for 1000 sequins, and more if I should want it, upon Yousef Cabil, Vizier of Jidda.

I was conducted into a large room, where Captain Thornhill was sitting, in a white calico waistcoat, and a very high-pointed white cotton night-cap, with a large tumbler of water before him, seemingly very deep in thought. The Emir Bahar's servant brought me forward by the hand, a little within the door ; but I was not desirous of advancing much farther, for fear of the salutation of being thrown down stairs again. He looked very steadily, but not sternly, at me, and desired the servant to go away, and shut the door. "Sir," says he, "are you an Englishman?" I bowed. "You surely are sick—you should be in your bed. Have you been long sick?" I said, "Long, sir." "Are you wanting a passage to India?" I again bowed. "Well," says he, "you look to be a man in distress ; if you have a secret I shall respect it, till

you please to tell it me ; but if you want a passage to India, apply to no one but Thornhill, of the Bengal Merchant. Perhaps you are afraid of somebody ; if so, ask for Mr. Greig, my lieutenant ; he will carry you on board my ship directly, where you will be safe." "Sir," said I, "I hope you will find me an honest man ; I have no enemy that I know, either in Jidda or elsewhere, nor do I owe any man anything." "I am sure," says he, "I am doing wrong in keeping a poor man standing, who ought to be in his bed. Here, Philip ! Philip !" Philip appeared. "Boy," says he, in Portuguese, which, as I imagine, he supposed I did not understand, "here is a poor Englishman that should be either in his bed or in his grave. Carry him to the cook, tell him to give him as much broth and mutton as he can eat ; the fellow seems to have been starved, but I would rather have the feeding of ten to India, than the burying of one at Jidda."

Philip carried me into a courtyard, with a portico on the left side of it, whither the cook brought me my dinner. Several of the English from the vessels, lascars and others, came in to look at me, and I heard it in general agreed among them, that I was a very thief-like fellow, and certainly a Turk ; and they should not like to fall into my hands. I fell fast asleep upon the mat, while Philip was ordering me another apartment. In the meantime the Vizier, having awakened from his mid-day nap, was full of hopes, from the quantity and appearance of my luggage, that a fine opportunity for pillage was at hand. He asked for the keys of the trunks. My servant said they were with me, but he would go instantly and bring them. That, however, was too long to stay ; no delay could possibly be granted. Accustomed to pilfer, they did not force the locks, but took off the hinges at the back. The *first thing* that presented itself to the Vizier's sight was the firman

of the Grand Seignior, magnificently written and titled, and the inscription powdered with gold dust, and wrapped in green taffetta. Among other important documents, he found a letter from Ali Bey to himself, written with all the superiority of a prince to a slave. In this letter the Bey told him plainly that if any injury was done to me, in person or property, he would send and punish the affront at the very gates of Mecca. There was another letter to him from Ibrahim Sikakeen, chief of the merchants at Cairo, ordering him to furnish me with a thousand sequins for my present use, and, if more were needed, to take my bill. He also found a crimson satin bag, with letters in my favour to Metical Aga, sword-bearer of the Sherriffe of Mecca, a man of great influence, residing in Jidda.

All was now wrong—the Vizier saw he had gone too far. My servant was ordered to nail up the hinges, but he declared it would be the last action of his life; that nobody opened baggage in that way, but with the intention of stealing, when the keys could be got; and, as there were many rich things in the trunk, intended as presents to the Sherriffe and Metical Aga, which might have been taken out, he washed his hands of the whole procedure; but knew his master would complain, and that loudly too, and would be heard both at Cairo and Jidda. The Vizier took his resolution in a moment, like a man. He nailed up the baggage, ordered his horse to be brought, and came down to the Bengal House. Great inquiry was made after the English nobleman, whom nobody had seen; but it was said that one of his servants was in the Bengal House. I was sitting drinking coffee on the mat, when the Vizier came, and the whole court was filled. One of the clerks of the custom-house asked me where my master was. I answered, “In heaven!” The

Vizier came forward and repeated the question. I told him I did not know the purport of his question, that I was the person to whom the baggage belonged, and that it was in my favour that the Grand Seignior and Bey had written.

We then all went up to my kind landlord, Captain Thornhill, to whom I made my excuse, on account of the ill-usage I had first met with from my own relative. He laughed very heartily at the narrative ; and from that time we lived in the greatest friendship and confidence. All was made up, even with Yousef Cabil, and all heads were employed to get the strongest letters possible to the Naybe of Masuah, the king of Abyssinia, Michael Suhul, his minister ; and the king of Sennaar.

My letters from Ali Bey, along with a very handsome present of pistols from myself, inclined Metical Aga in my favour. The English gentleman at Jidda used their influence, which was very powerful, in my behalf ; and Captain Thomas Price, of the "Lion" of Bombay, got Metical Aga to send a man of his own with me. All the letters were written in a style such as I could have desired ; and an Abyssinian, called Mahomet Gibberti, was appointed to go with particular letters, besides those I carried myself, and to be an eye-witness of my reception.

Jidda is very unwholesome, as is, indeed, all the east coast of the Red Sea. Immediately without the gate, to the eastward, is a desert plain, filled with the huts of the Bedoweens or country Arabs, built of long bundles of spartum, or bent grass. These Bedoweens supply Jidda with milk and butter. The India trade, which is great, does little good to the town, as the customs are all immediately sent to a needy sovereign, and a hungry set of dependants, at Mecca. All the profit of the traffic is in the hands of strangers, who, as soon as the market is over (it does not last

six weeks), retire to Yemen, and other neighbouring countries, which abound in every sort of provisions, whilst in Jidda provisions often rise to a prodigious price. In consequence of this scarcity of provisions, few of the inhabitants can afford themselves the privilege granted by Mahomet of marrying more than one wife.

It was on the 8th of July, 1769, that I sailed from the harbour of Jidda, the English vessels which were lying there hoisting their colours, and saluting our little vessel with their guns, very much to the surprise of the rais. We reached Konfodah on the 11th. It is a small miserable village, of about two hundred houses. I dined with the Emir Ferhan, governor of the town, on very excellent provision, dressed according to their custom. He said the country near the shore was desert; but a little inland the soil produced everything, especially if they had any showers of rain. On my remarking that I had travelled about 2000 miles, and never till now seen or heard of a shower of rain, he said, "You are going to countries where you will have rain and wind, sufficiently cold, and where the water in the mountains is harder than the dry land, and people stand upon it. We have only the remnant of their showers, and it is to that we owe our greatest happiness." I was much pleased with his conversation: he seemed to have a more rational knowledge of things, and expressed himself more elegantly, than any man I had spoken with in Arabia.

On the morning of the 18th we came in sight of the mountains under which lies the town of Loheia. This town is built upon the south-west side of a peninsula, surrounded everywhere, but on the east, by the sea. At Loheia we had a very uneasy sensation—a kind of prickling in our legs, which were bare,



occasioned by the salt effluvia from the earth, which is here strongly impregnated with that mineral. All sorts of provisions are plentiful, but the water is bad. There is also plenty of fruit brought from the mountains by the Bedowé, who live in the skirts of the town, and supply it also with milk and firewood. The government here is gentler than any Moorish government in Arabia or Africa, and the people are altogether more civilized. The women at Loheia are as solicitous to please as those of the most polished nations in Europe, and, though very retired, they are not less careful of their dress and persons. They dye their feet and hands with henna, and wear their hair plaited in long tails behind.

At Loheia we received a letter from Mahomet Gibberti, telling us that it would be yet ten days before he could join us, and desiring us to be ready by that time. This hurried us extremely, for we were much afraid we should not have time to see the remaining part of the Arabian Gulf. Leaving Loheia, accordingly, on the 27th, we passed several insignificant islands, and on the 29th reached Mocha. The town of Mocha presents an agreeable appearance from the sea. Behind it there is a grove of palm trees, that do not seem to have the beauty of those in Egypt, probably owing to their being exposed to the violent south-westers that blow here, and make it very uneasy riding for vessels. On the 30th, with a gentle but steady wind, we sailed for the mouth of the Indian Ocean. The coast of Arabia, all along from Mocha to the Straits of Babelmandeb, is a bold coast, close to which you may run without danger night or day. We kept within a mile of the shore, which in some places seemed to be wooded, in others flat and bare, bounded by mountains at a considerable distance.

We anchored, on the morning of the 31st, above Jibbel Raban, or Pilot's Island, just under the cape, which, on the Arabian side, forms the north entrance of the Straits. From this we crossed over to the island of Perim, a barren rock about five miles long, with almost no appearance of vegetation. Here a strong west wind seemed likely to detain us. To add to our discomfort, though we had abundance of provisions, we could get no fuel. On the 1st of August we ate drammock, made with cold water and flour, mixed with butter and honey, but we soon found this would not do. We observed some people on shore, whom the rais declared to be pirates; but our disgust at the drammock dose was greater than our fear of pirates, and we were preparing to land in search of firewood, when, happily, the wind changed, and we at once took advantage of it to steer for Loheia. On the 2d, we landed on a low island, where we saw the stock of an old acacia tree and some drift-wood. Here we made up, for our cold repast on drammock in the Straits. We made several large fires; one took charge of the coffee, another boiled the rice; we killed four turtles, made ready a dolphin; got beer, wine, and brandy, and drank the King's health in earnest, which our regimen would not allow us to do in the Straits of Babelmandeb. On the 6th we arrived safely at Loheia.

I waited at Loheia for Mahomet Gibberti, who did not arrive till the 1st of September. He brought with him letters from Metical Aga to Ras Michael, governor of the province of Tigré, in Abyssinia. He also brought a letter to me, and another to Achmet, the Naybe's nephew and future successor, from Sidi Ali Zimzimia. In this letter Sidi Ali desires me to put little trust in the Naybe, but to keep no secret from Achmet, his nephew, who would certainly be my friend.

All being prepared for our departure, we sailed from Loheia on the 3d of September. The vessel being provided with a very scanty supply of water, the rais directed our course to Foosht, an island at some distance to the north-west. Having filled our skins (they make use of no casks in this sea), and procured a supply of firewood, we resumed our voyage. I soon found that a new trouble, of a very particular kind, had fallen upon our vessel. This was the appearance of a ghost!

An Abyssinian, who had died on board, and been buried on our coming out from Loheia bay, had been seen upon the bowsprit, and had terrified the sailors very much. Even the rais had been not a little alarmed; and though he could not positively say that he had seen him, yet, after I was in bed, on the 7th, he complained seriously to me of the bad consequences it would produce if a gale of wind were to rise and the ghost were to keep his place, and desired me to come forward and speak to him. "My good rais," said I, "I am exceedingly tired, and my head aches much with the sun, which hath been violent to-day. You know the Abyssinian paid for his passage, and, if he does not overload the ship (and I apprehend he should be lighter than when we took him on board), I do not think that, in justice or equity, you or I can hinder the ghost from continuing his voyage to Abyssinia, as we cannot judge what serious business he may have there." The rais began to bless himself that he did not know anything of his affairs. "Then," said I, "if you do not find him make the vessel too heavy before, do not molest him. If he does us no harm, let him ride upon the bowsprit till he is tired, or till he comes to Masuah, for, unless he hurts or troubles you, I do not think I am under any obligation

to get out of my bed to molest him. Only see that he carries nothing off with him!"

The rais now seemed to be exceedingly offended, and said, for his part, he did not care for his life more than any other man on board. It was a gale of wind, rather than the ghost, that he dreaded; but he had always heard that learned people could speak to ghosts. "Will you be so good, rais," said I, "as to step forward, and tell him that I am going to drink coffee, and should be glad if he would walk into the cabin and say anything he has to communicate—to me if he is a Christian, and, if not, to Mahomet Gibberti." A Moor, called Yasmine, well known to me afterwards, now came forward, and told me that Gibberti, who was very bad with sea-sickness, begged that I would not laugh at the spirit, or speak so familiarly of him, because it might very possibly be the devil, who often appeared in these parts. This bad news of my friend Mahomet banished all merriment; and I gave my servant the necessary orders to attend upon him.

A few days after this, having passed Jibbel Teir, we were holding straight for Dahalac, when our vessel struck upon a reef of coral rocks. The boat was immediately launched, and one of my servants, the rais, and two sailors put on board. Yasmine stripped himself, and plunged into the water to assist them. They got upon the bank, with poles and handspikes trying to stir the vessel, though for some time in vain. The rais put forth his efforts by attaching a rope to the vessel, and pulling with his boat in the direction in which the crew were pushing. A slight breeze springing up at this instant seconded these exertions, and, to our joy, the vessel slid gently off, free from the shoal, without having sustained any material damage. Everybody praised the courage and readiness of Yasmine. From that day he grew into

consideration with me, which increased ever after, till my departure from Abyssinia.

During the hurry of this transaction the ghost was said to have been again seen on the bowsprit, as if pushing the vessel ashore. As this was breaking covenant with me as a passenger, I thought it was time some notice should be taken of him, since the rais had referred it entirely to me. I inquired who the persons were that had seen him. Two moors of Hamazen were the first that perceived him. They declared that during the night they had seen him go and come several times ; once, pushing against the bowsprit ; another time, pulling upon the rope as if he had an anchor ashore ; when the vessel began to move, he turned into a small blue flame, and, when it got off the reef, he disappeared altogether. "Now," said I, "it is plain from this change of shape that he has left us for ever : let us see, therefore, whether he has done us any harm. Have any of you any baggage stowed away forward?" The strangers answered : "Yes ; it is all there." "Then," said I, "see if every man has got his own." A great noise and confusion ensued. Every one was plundered of something,—all the precious part of their little stores was stolen. "I appeal to you, Yasmine and Mahomet Gibberti," said I, "whether these two Moors, who saw the ghost oftenest, and were most intimate with him, have not a chance of knowing where the things are hid? Go, then, and examine that part where the Moors sleep." Before the search could begin, however, one of them told Yasmine where everything was ; and, accordingly, all was found and restored. The ghost, finding his associates discovered, was never seen any more.

On the 12th we came in sight of Dahalac, and the next day anchored at Dobelew, a harbour on its northern side. Dahalac

is by far the largest island in the Red Sea. Its greatest length is thirty-seven miles, and its greatest breadth eighteen. Though in the neighbourhood of Abyssinia, Dahalac does not partake of its seasons ; no rain falls here from the end of March to the beginning of October ; but in the intermediate months there are violent showers for twelve hours at a time, which deluge the island, and fill the cisterns so as to serve all the succeeding summer ; for there are no springs in the island. These cisterns alone preserve the water, and of them there yet remain 370, all hewn out of the solid rock. They say these were the work of the Persians ; but it is more probable they were constructed by the first Ptolemies. Their present possessors have not industry enough to keep one of the 370 clear for the use of man. They are open to every sort of animal, and half full of mud and filth. The sustenance of the poorer sort of the inhabitants is entirely shell and other fish. In those parts of the island which are little frequented by boats from Arabia, the miserable inhabitants are sometimes a whole year without tasting bread. The better class of the inhabitants have, besides fish, goat's milk and dora, or Indian corn. Although the state of Dahalac at present is so miserable, matters were widely different in former times. The pearl fishery flourished greatly here under the Ptolemies : and, even in the time of the Caliphs, it produced a great revenue. But nothing, which violence and injustice can ruin, ever can subsist under Turkish government. The Arabs at Dahalac naturally objected to work without salary, and in time they became ignorant of the fishery in which they were once so skilled. The immense treasures in the bottom of the Red Sea have thus been abandoned for near 200 years, though they never were richer in all probability than at present. No nation is

now turn them to any profit but the English East India Company. If they do not, I am persuaded the time is not far off when these countries shall, in some shape or other, be subjects of a new master. Were another Peter, another Elizabeth, or better than either, another Catherine, to succeed the present, in an empire already extended to China—were such a sovereign, unfettered by European politics, to prosecute that easy task of pushing those mountebanks of sovereigns and statesmen, these stage-players of government, the Turks, into Asia, the inhabitants of the whole country who already in their hearts look upon her as their sovereign, because she is the head of their religion, would, I am persuaded, submit without a blow that instant the Turks were removed on the other side of the Hellespont.

The small islands which we passed between Dahalac and the mainland had no features of interest. Our progress was delayed by contrary winds ; but, on the afternoon of the 19th of September, we came safely to an anchor in the harbour of Masuah.

## CHAPTER V.

*A description of Abyssinia—First peopling of it—Cushites and  
Shepherds—Other Settlers—Account of the Galla—Falasha—  
Shangalla—Geographical division of Abyssinia into provinces.*

IT is a tradition among the Abyssians, which they say they have had from time immemorial, that almost immediately after the flood, Cush, grandson of Noah, with his family, passing through Atbara from the low country of Egypt, this region being then without inhabitants, came to the ridge of mountains which separate the flat country of Atbara from the more mountainous part of Abyssinia. Terrified by the flood, the remembrance of which was still fresh in their minds, and apprehensive of being again involved in a similar calamity, they chose for their habitation caves in the sides of these mountains, rather than trust themselves on the plain. So says the tradition; but it is more probable that they made choice of this district at first, from its fertility and agreeable climate, as well as from the fear lest, if they advanced farther south, the tropical rains would continue to increase in duration and intensity. It is an undoubted fact, at all events, that here the Cushites, with unparalleled industry, and with instruments utterly unknown to us, formed for themselves commodious yet wonderful habitations in the heart of mountains of granite and marble, which remain entire in great numbers to this day. The tradition further says, that they built



the city of Axum, early in the days of Abraham. Soon after this, they pushed their colony down to Atbara, whence they extended, till they became, as Josephus says, the Meröetes, or inhabitants of the island of Meröe. It is probable that, shortly after establishing themselves at Meröe, they stretched on to Thebes. We know that Thebes was founded by a colony of Ethiopians, though whether they came direct from Meröe has not been ascertained. We find at Thebes, as at Meröe, a vast number of caves in the mountains—evidently the first abodes of the colony.

While the descendants of Cush were thus extending in the central and northern parts of the country, their brethren in the south were not idle. They had occupied the mountains that run parallel to the Arabian Gulf, which in all times were called Saba, or Azabo (both of which signify *south*). The Cushite was an astronomer. At Thebes he had a clear sky, day and night, suited for his observations; but in these mountains the clouds and tropical rains sadly hindered him. He went still farther south, to be able to prosecute the same researches as his brethren at Meröe and Thebes. Advancing within the southern tropic, he found that, though he had not got out of the rains, he had reached a better climate. The mountains yielded him gold and silver in large quantities; and the discovery of these precious metals determined his occupation, and made the riches and importance of his country.

In course of time, the colonies in the north began to study architecture, and to build towns, which they substituted for their caves. This change brought others: they became traders, farmers, artificers, and even practical astronomers. Their brethren in the south, with six months of rain, could share only

partially in these improvements. They could, however, study within doors, in the gloomy rainy weather, the observations made by their countrymen under a purer sky. They are said to have invented letters and arithmetical characters ; while those who had stretched still farther south, and established themselves at Sofala, engaged vigorously in trade, and at the same time gave their attention to astronomical and meteorological observations.

The Cushite, the very nature of whose commerce (as the collecting of gold, the gathering and preparing of spices, etc.) kept him necessarily at home, required a carrier to carry on his traffic throughout the continent ; and Providence had provided him with one in a neighbouring nation. These people were in Hebrew called *Phut*, and in all other languages, *Shepherds*. They had long hair, European features, and dark complexion, and lived in tents, moving with their cattle from place to place. They occupied a strip of land running parallel to the sea-coast from Cape Gardafui to the Isthmus of Suez ; but the principal seat of their residence and power was that flat part of Africa between the northern tropic and the mountains of Abyssinia. The main employment of these shepherds was to convey Arabian and African goods all over the continent ; and by this traffic they became rich and powerful.

Nothing was more different than the manner of life of the Cushite and that of his carrier, the shepherd. While the latter was constantly on the move, driving his cattle before him, or crossing the desert with merchandize, the former, who had now forsaken his caves, was living in cities which he had built, amassing gold, arranging the invoices of his spices, hunting in the season to provide himself with ivory, and food for the winter.

His mountains, and the cities he afterwards built, were situated upon a black, loamy earth, which subjected him during the tropical rains to a singular plague, in the shape of large swarms of flies, which appeared wherever the loamy earth was. This



insect is called Zimb, or Tsaltsalya, and has not been described by any naturalist. It is in size very little larger than a bee; its wings, which are of pure gauze, without colour or spot on them, are broader than those of the bee; the head is large, the upper jaw or lip is sharp, and has

at the end of it a strong pointed hair, the lower jaw having two of the same description; the legs are serrated in the inside; and the whole body is covered with brown hair or down.\* As soon as this plague appears, all the cattle forsake their food,

\* As this is a part of Bruce's narrative which was received with much incredulity, we may be permitted here to refer to the description given of a similar insect by Dr. Livingstone, in his recently published "Travels and Researches in South Africa." Of this insect, called the Tsetse or *Glossina morsitans*, which is smaller than the Abyssinian Tsaltsalya, Dr. Livingstone remarks: "Its peculiar buzz, when once heard, can never be forgotten by the traveller whose means of locomotion are domestic animals; for it is well known that the bite of this poisonous insect is certain death to the ox, horse, and dog. In this journey, though we were not aware of any great number having at any time lighted on our cattle, we lost forty-three fine oxen by its bite. We watched the animals carefully, and believe that not a score of flies were ever upon them. . . . The south bank of the Chobe was infested by them, and the northern bank, where our cattle were placed, only fifty yards distant,

and run wildly about the plains, till they die of fatigue, pain, and hunger. The only remedy is to leave the black earth, and hasten down to the sands of Atbara, there to remain while the rains last, this cruel enemy never daring to pursue them thither.

The camel, the "ship of the desert," as the Arabs emphatically call him, though he can endure the greatest fatigue, travelling patiently and vigorously all day long, with a prodigious load, through countries infected with poisonous winds, and glowing with parched, never-cooling sands, cannot withstand this seemingly insignificant adversary. Though his size is immense, and his body covered with a thick skin, he is not able to endure the punctures which this fly makes with his

contained not a single specimen. . . . . When one is allowed to feed freely on the hand, it is seen to insert the middle prong of three portions into which the proboscis divides, somewhat deeply into the true skin; it then draws it out a little way, and it assumes a crimson colour as the mandibles come into brisk operation. The previously shrunken belly swells out, and if left undisturbed, the fly quietly departs when it is full. A slight itching irritation follows, but not more than in the bite of a mosquito. In the ox this same bite produces no more immediate effects than in man. It does not startle him as the gad-fly does; but a few days afterwards the following symptoms supervene:—The eyes and nose begin to run, the coat stares as if the animal were cold, a swelling appears under the jaw, and sometimes at the navel, and though the animal continues to graze, emaciation commences, accompanied with a peculiar flaccidity of the muscles, and this proceeds unchecked until, perhaps months afterwards, purging comes on, and the animal, no longer able to graze, perishes in a state of extreme exhaustion. Those which are in good condition often perish soon after the bite is inflicted, with staggering and blindness, as if the brain were affected by it." Dr. Livingstone gives other interesting particulars regarding this fly, which we have not space to quote. See his *Travels* (London, 1857), pp. 80–83, 487, 531, 571, etc.

pointed proboscis. He must lose no time in removing to the sands of Atbara; for when he is attacked by the Zimb, his body becomes covered with lumps, which break and putrify, to his certain destruction. Even the elephant and rhinoceros, which, by reason of their enormous bulk, and the vast quantities of food and water they daily need, cannot shift to desert and dry places, are obliged to roll themselves in mud and mire, which, when dry, coats them over like armour, and enables them to stand their ground against this winged assassin; yet I have found some of these tubercles upon almost every elephant and rhinoceros that I have seen; and I attribute them to this cause. It is no partial emigration which is produced by the advent of these flies; the inhabitants of all the countries, from the mountains of Abyssinia northward to the confluence of the Nile and the Astaboras, are once a year compelled to change their abode, and seek refuge in the sands of Beja.

The mountains which run through the country of the shepherds, divide the seasons so exactly, that while the eastern side is deluged with rain for the six months that constitute our winter, the western side enjoys perpetual sunshine and active vegetation. Again, during the six months of our summer, Atbara, or the western side of these mountains, is constantly covered with clouds and rain; while at the same time the shepherd on the eastern side feeds his flocks amid the most exuberant foliage and herbage, enjoying fair weather and free from the fly, or any similar molestation. These great advantages have very naturally occasioned the countries of Atbara and Beja to be the principal residence of the shepherd and his cattle, and have entailed upon him the necessity of a perpetual change of place. Yet the inconvenience of this perio-

dical migration is small, for, from the rain on the west side, a man, in the space of four hours, will find himself in the sunshine of the east.

But these were not the only nations who settled in Abyssinia. Other tribes of a fairer complexion, distinct from them and from each other, came hither at a very early period ; indeed, it is from the number of different people who were collected within its borders, that Abyssinia has been named Habesh, "the assembled nations." These tribes probably came from Palestine, whence they fled to escape the exterminating sword of the Israelites, led by Caleb and Joshua. The names of these nations are, Amhara, Agow of Damat, Agow of Tehera, and Gafat. To gratify the curious in the study and history of language, I, with great pains and difficulty got the whole of the book of Canticles translated into each of these languages. This barbarous polyglot I have presented to the British Museum.

The Galla, or shepherds, are a much more considerable nation than any of those just mentioned. They also call themselves Agaazi, and say that, like the shepherds of Atbara, they were formerly carriers between the Indian and Atlantic Oceans, and supplied the interior part of the continent with Indian commodities. The Galla have contributed more towards the weakening of the Abyssinian empire than all their civil wars, and all their other enemies put together. During my residence in Abyssinia, I gathered a good deal of information regarding this people ; and I think some account of them will be appropriate in this place.

The Gala are generally of a brown complexion, though some who inhabit the valleys in the low country are perfectly black. It is probable that they originally lived under or beyond the line ; but for many years they have been steadily moving northward.

They are divided into tribes, to the number of twenty-one, which, again, form three divisions of seven tribes each, under a king or chief. There exists also a kind of nobility among them, from whose families alone the king can be chosen. Yet there are certain degrees of merit, all of them warlike, by which a plebeian may rise to the rank of a noble. But no one can be elected to a place in their rude aristocracy till he is forty years of age, or has slain with his own hand such a number of enemies as, added to the years of his age, will make up forty.

The Galla are reputed good soldiers for a surprise or sudden dash, but lack constancy and perseverance. They accomplish incredible marches ; swim rivers, holding by the tails of their horses ; do the utmost mischief possible in the shortest time ; and rarely return by the same way they came. Iron is scarce among them, so that their lances are only poles, sharpened at the end and hardened in the fire. They use, also, shields made of bull's hide. Though their arms are so little formidable, their attack is very much dreaded. Probably the frantic howl which they raise at the moment they charge contributes materially to the panic that is often produced by their onset.

Both sexes are rather below the middle size, but they are exceedingly light and agile. Their women are very prolific and healthy ; the birth of their children does not interrupt for a day their usual occupations ! The men, and many of the women, adorn their persons with the entrails of oxen, and smear themselves abundantly with grease.

With regard to their religion, it has been said that they have none at all. This, however, is a mistake. The wanzey tree, under which their kings are crowned, is worshipped by every *tribe* ; and they venerate the moon and several of the stars. They

believe in a future state of happiness, but seem to have no idea, or a very vague one, of future punishment.

Polygamy is allowed among them, but the men are commonly content with one wife. As, however, it is reckoned a good thing to be surrounded by a large family, the wife of a Galla, if she has presented him with only a few children, generally persuades her husband to take another wife, and herself goes through the necessary negotiations with the family of the person fixed upon. The children of the first wife are, after the marriage, formally acknowledged by the men of the bride's family as entitled equally with their own children, to their care and protection. The first wife retains the precedence in her own household, and treats the second like a grown-up daughter.

The eldest son succeeds his father when he dies, or becomes old and unfit for work. In the latter case he is bound to support him. When the eldest son dies, leaving a widow, his youngest brother is obliged to marry her.

The language of this remarkable nation is entirely different from that of any other people in Abyssinia, and is the same throughout all the tribes, with very little variation of dialect.

The Falasha are another people of Abyssinia, having a language and traditions of their own. They are Jews, and the account that they give of their origin is, that they came from Jerusalem along with Menilek, the son of Solomon and the queen of Sheba. When the Abyssinians renounced Judaism for Christianity, the Falasha adhered to their ancient faith. As will be seen from the sketch of the history of Abyssinia in the following chapter, this nation in former times acted a very prominent part in the affairs of the kingdom. Though they have met with many



disasters, they have still as their ruler a prince of the house of Judah. Such, at least, is their assertion.

The Shangalla, or negroes, who seem to be the miserable remnants of the once powerful and polished Cushites or Ethiopians, deserve to be noticed in this summary view of the inhabitants of Abyssinia. They occupy a low flat district of no great extent, to the west of Tigré. During the fair half of the year these Shangalla live under the shade of trees, the lower branches of which they bend down and fix in the ground, covering them with the skins of wild beasts. In these verdant tents they live till the rainy season begins, when they seek refuge in rude caves in the soft sandy rocks. For food, they hunt the elephant, rhinoceros, hippopotamus, and other large animals. Where their country is broadest, the trees thickest, and the water in the largest pools, there the most powerful tribes of the Shangalla are to be found. In districts where the animals just mentioned do not abound, the Shangalla subsist on buffaloes, deer, lions, crocodiles, fish, and even serpents, locusts, and lizards. They preserve meat for their winter consumption, by cutting it into long narrow strips, which they hang up in the sun to dry.

The Shangalla have but one language, which has a very guttural sound. They worship trees, serpents, the moon, planets, and stars in certain positions. They have priests, or rather diviners, who seem to be looked upon as servants of the evil being, and profess to be able to afflict their enemies with sickness. Polygamy is common, for the same reason as it is among the Galla.

They are all archers from their infancy. Their bows are made of wild fennel, and are so elastic that the weapon with which the full-grown savage defends himself against his enemies, or engages

in the chase, is often that with which he played in his boyish years. They have a curious custom of decorating their bows with a ring or strip of the skin of every animal they kill with them. The accumulation of these eventually makes the bow too stiff for use, when it is hung up as a trophy. His favourite bow is buried with the Shangalla when he dies—in another world he will have strength sufficient to bend it.

It has been the custom to describe these people as vicious and immoral in the highest degree. I do not scruple to assert, that great injustice has been done them in these accounts. To describe them justly, we should see them in their native purity of manners, among their native woods, living on the produce of their own daily labours, without other liquor than their own pools and springs, the drinking of which is followed by no intoxication, nor other pleasure than that of assuaging thirst. After having been torn from their own country and connections, reduced to the condition of brutes, to labour for a being they never before knew ; after lying, stealing, and all the long list of European crimes have been made, as it were, necessary to them ; after the delusion occasioned by drinking spirits is found to be the only thing that frees them, though only for a time, from the sense of their utter wretchedness ; in short, after we have made them monsters, we describe them as such, forgetful that they are not as their Maker created them ; but that we ourselves have wrought the change, for ends which I fear will one day be found not to be a sufficient excuse for the enormities they have occasioned.

On the accession of every new king to the throne of Abyssinia, there is, among other amusements, a general hunt after the Shangalla. Inroads are made upon them, also, from time to time by the governors of the adjacent countries, who are obliged to

render as tribute to the king of Abyssinia a certain number of slaves. When a settlement is surprised, the men are slaughtered, the women who are not slain kill themselves, or go mad ; and the boys and girls are taken to be educated as slaves for the palace and the great houses of Abyssinia.

Having given this account of the first peopling of Abyssinia, and of some of the most interesting tribes at present to be found in the country, I proceed to notice the geographical division of the kingdom into provinces. The manners and customs of the Abyssinians of the present day, as I had an opportunity of observing them, will be described in a subsequent chapter.

Abyssinia is divided into two provinces—Tigré, which extends from the Red Sea to the river Tacazzé ; and Amhara, from that river westward to the Galla, which inclose Abyssinia proper on all sides except the north-west, where the Shangalla complete the circle. This division, however, has neither geographical nor historical precision, as there are in Tigré many little provinces that do not belong to it ; and Amhara, which gives its name to the second, is but a very small part of it.

Masuah was in ancient times one of the principal places of residence of the Baharnagash, who was third person in rank in the kingdom. The office was lucrative as well as honourable, as this district had many valuable productions. When Masuah was taken by the Turks, a basha was appointed here. Since their expulsion it has been governed by a Naybe. There is still a Baharnagash, but his district is small, and his office and dignity insignificant, compared with what they used to be. He acts, however, as a salutary check on the Naybe of Masuah, whom he could starve into obedience, as he has no longer a naval force to support him.

Tigré is a large and important province, of great wealth and power. All the merchandise destined to cross the Red Sea to Arabia must pass through this province, so that the governor has the choice of all commodities wherewith to make his market. The greatest length of Tigré is two hundred miles, and the greatest breadth one hundred and twenty. It lies between the territory of the Baharnagash (which reaches to the river Mareb) on the east, and the river Tacazzé on the west. Siré, once an independent province, was united to Tigré on account of the misconduct of its governor, in the reign of Yasous "the Great."

Crossing the Tacazzé, we come to the mountainous district of Samen, inhabited by the Falasha, with Gideon and Judith for their king and queen, as in early times.

South from Tigré is Begemder, including Lasta and Amhara. This district produces the best soldiers in Abyssinia, both cavalry and infantry. It is asserted that it can raise an army of forty-five thousand men; but this must be an exaggeration. Iron is abundant in the mountains, and the country possesses a fine breed of cattle. Adjoining Amhara to the east is Angot, which, with the exception of a few villages, has been conquered by the Galla.

Farther south are the provinces of Walaka and Shoa. The latter is famous for the refuge it afforded to the infant prince of the house of Solomon, who was the only survivor of the massacre of the seed-royal by Judith, about the year 900. For four hundred years the royal family remained here, till it was restored to its ancient dignity.

Gojam, a flat pastoral country, about eighty miles long and forty broad, lies to the west of the last-named provinces. It is almost encircled by the Nile. The inhabitants are good farmers.

(so far at least as cattle are concerned), but bad soldiers. South from Gojam is the small territory of Damat, which is properly a part of it, the name Gojam being generally given to the whole peninsula inclosed by the river.

Dembea is the country surrounding the lake of that name. This is the granary of Abyssinia. The mountainous region of Kuara has a tribe of pagan blacks, called Ganjar, the descendants of fugitive black slaves, and other vagabonds who have joined them during successive generations.

The frontier land, stretching on by Ras el Feel and Tchelga to Tcherkin, is wholly occupied by Mahometans, who form a barrier against the Arabs of Sennaar. There are many other small provinces, but none of them are of such importance as to require special mention in this place.

## CHAPTER VI.

*Sketch of the History of Abyssinia from the earliest period down to the time of my arrival in the country.*

THE history of Abyssinia commences with the visit of the Queen of Sheba, or Saba, to Jerusalem.\* Many writers have thought that this queen was an Arab. But Saba was a separate state, and the Sabceans a distinct people from the Ethiopians and the Arabs, and they have continued so till very lately. We know from history that it was the custom of these people to have women for their sovereigns, in preference to men. This queen is called by the Arabs Belkis, and by the Abyssinians Maqueda. Our Saviour speaks of her simply as the "Queen of the South," saying that "she came from the uttermost part of the earth." Her territory appears to have been that portion of the coast of Africa opposite to the island of Madagascar, now called Sofala. The ships of Solomon coming to Ophir for gold, and the other precious productions of her country, would very naturally excite in the mind of the queen a desire to see this great monarch, of whom she heard so much. Pagan, Arab, Moor, Abyssinian, indeed the inhabitants of all the countries round, vouch for her visit to Jerusalem, almost in the same terms as Scripture.

The annals of Abyssinia say that the Queen of Sheba was a Pagan when she left Saba or Azab (for they do not hold the

\* See 1 Kings x. 1-13; 2 Chronicles ix. 1-12; Matthew xii. 42.

theory that she came from the far south of the continent), but that, being filled with admiration at Solomon's works, she was converted to Judaism in Jerusalem, and bore him a son, whom she called Menilek. She returned to Saba with her son, and some years afterwards sent him back to Solomon to be instructed. Solomon did not neglect his charge; and Menilek, before his return to Saba, was anointed and crowned King of Ethiopia, in the temple of Jerusalem, and, on his inauguration, took the name of David. He brought home with him a colony of Jews, among whom were many doctors of the law of Moses, chief of whom was Azarias, son of Zadok the priest, who brought with him a Hebrew transcript of the law, which was given in charge to him as Nebrit, or high priest. This charge, though the book was burned in one of the Moorish wars, along with the church in which it was kept, is still continued; and the descendants of Azarias are Nebrits, or keepers of the church of Axum, to this day.

All Abyssinia was thus converted to Judaism, and church and state were modelled according to the forms prevailing at Jerusalem. The last act of the Queen of Sheba's reign was one settling the mode of succession to the throne. She enacted, first, that the crown should be hereditary in the family of Solomon for ever; secondly, that, on her demise, no woman should be capable of wearing that crown, but that it should descend to heirs-male, however distant; and, lastly, that the heirs-male of the royal house should always be confined as prisoners on a high mountain, there to remain till their death, or till the succession should open to them. Having enacted these laws, which were to be unchangeable, the queen died, and was succeeded by her son Menilek, called also David I., who ascended the throne, B.C. 986.

A list of the sovereigns of Abyssinia from the Queen of Sheba

to the Nativity is preserved ; but little dependence can be put upon it. On one point, however, the Abyssinians have no doubt, viz., that the descendants of Solomon have continued to reign till the present day. Their device is a lion passant, and their motto, "Mo Anbasa am Nizilet Solomon am Negadé Jude." "The lion of the race of Solomon and tribe of Juda hath overcome."

About three hundred years after the birth of Christ, Meropius, a philosopher of Tyre, a Greek by nation and religion, had taken a passage in a ship bound for India, accompanied by two young men, Frumentius and Ædesius, whom he had carefully educated, and meant to bring up to trade. The vessel was wrecked on the coast of Abyssinia ; Meropius was killed by the natives, but the two boys were spared, and carried to Axum, then the capital of the kingdom. They acquired the language very speedily, and, as in that country there is a great tendency to admire strangers, these were soon looked upon as two prodigies. Ædesius, probably the duller of the two, was set over the king's household and wardrobe ; and Frumentius was judged worthy by the queen regent,\* or *Iteghé*, to have the care of the young prince's education. While he diligently instructed his pupil in the various branches of learning with which it was deemed desirable that he should be acquainted, Frumentius also succeeded in imparting to him a love and veneration for the Christian religion. Having accomplished this, Frumentius set out for Alexandria, where he found St. Athanasius, recently elected to that see, to whom he narrated what had passed in Ethiopia, expressing his conviction

\* Though women are strictly excluded from the succession, the queen upon whose head the king may have put the crown, becomes regent of the kingdom, and guardian of the heir to the crown, in the event of his being a minor. The regency ceases on the young king reaching his majority.



that, if proper pastors were sent to instruct them, the Abyssinians might be converted to Christianity. Athanasius embraced the opportunity with all the earnestness that became his station and profession. He ordained Frumentius as Bishop of Abyssinia, and sent him back to accomplish the great work for which he was so well fitted. The young king at once publicly professed his adherence to the Christian religion, and the greater part of the nation quietly followed his example.

For six hundred years after this period the history of Abyssinia presents no facts of sufficient interest to require special notice here. In the year 960 occurred the first interruption of the succession in the line of Solomon. The Jews, who had always preserved an independent sovereignty, were at this time ruled by a king and queen, named Gideon and Judith. The royal residence was on a high, precipitous rock, called the Jew's Rock ; and other heights formed strong natural fortresses for them. They had received frequent accessions of strength from Palestine and Arabia ; and the havoc wrought at this period among the Christians by an epidemic disease served to increase the confidence they felt in their own power. The king's daughter, Judith, a woman of great beauty and talents for intrigue, conceived the idea of attempting the subversion of the Christian religion, and with it the succession in the line of Solomon. Accordingly, she surprised the rock Damo, the residence of the Christian princes, the whole of whom, to the number it is said of four hundred, were put to death. Some nobles of Amhara, upon the news of this catastrophe, at once conveyed the infant king, Del Naad, now the only remaining prince of his race, into the powerful and loyal province of Shoa ; and thus the royal family was preserved, to be again restored. Judith

took possession of the throne, in defiance of the law of the Queen of Saba. Not only did she enjoy the royal dignity herself (she had a long reign of forty years), but she transmitted it to her posterity for five generations. Then succeeded a family allied to that of Judith, with whom the court returned to the Christian religion. The names of six kings of this family are preserved ; but the Abyssinian annals say little regarding their history, further than that it contrasted very favourably with the violence and bloodshed which characterized the reigns of their predecessors. The usurpation lasted about three hundred years. All this time the line of Solomon continued to reign in the loyal province of Shoa, never, apparently, making any attempt to recover their ancient kingdom. At the period, however, at which we have now reached, Tecla Haimanout, a monk and native of Abyssinia, who had been ordained Abuna, or high priest, and had founded the famous monastery of Debra Libanos, persuaded the reigning king, over whom he had an extraordinary influence, to restore the crown to the line of Solomon. A treaty was accordingly drawn up by the Abuna Tecla Haimanout, by which it was agreed, first, that the kingdom of Abyssinia should be forthwith resigned to the reigning prince of the line of Solomon, then in Shoa ; secondly, that a portion of land should be given to the retiring sovereign, and certain immunities and honours be secured to him and his heirs for ever ; thirdly, that one-third of the kingdom should be ceded absolutely to the Abuna, for the maintenance of himself and the church ; and, lastly, that no native Abyssinian should thereafter be chosen Abuna. These articles being agreed to, the race of Solomon, after a banishment of three hundred years, again mounted the throne of Abyssinia.

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years after the restoration of the race of Solomon, with petty wars with the Moors and other nations, and with domestic commotions. About the middle of the fifteenth century, we have the first mention of any formal intercourse between Abyssinia and Europe. Prince Henry of Portugal, who had been long devoted to the study of mathematics, had prevailed upon his father to attempt the discovery of a way to India, by sailing round the continent of Africa; but all the expeditions had failed, from the captains and their crews losing courage before they reached the line. It thereupon occurred to him, that the attempt might be made to reach India by land. The common track for the Indian trade was from the east to the west sea, through the desert, the whole breadth of Africa. Prince Henry had projected a route parallel to this, to the southward, through a Christian country; for it had been long reported by Christians from Jerusalem, that monks occasionally resorted to the holy city who said they were the subjects of a Christian prince in the very heart of Africa, whose dominions reached from the east to the west sea. The King of Portugal, therefore, chose Peter Covillan and Alphonso de Paiva as his ambassadors to this country, whose king was said to be called Prester John. These two travellers proceeded by Alexandria and Cairo to Suez, where they joined a caravan of Moors, with whom they travelled to Aden. De Paiva perished; but Covillan, after visiting India, succeeded in reaching Shoa, where the Abyssinian court then resided.

Covillan returned no more to Europe. A cruel policy of Abyssinia makes this a favour constantly denied to strangers. He married and obtained large possessions in the country of his compulsory residence, and held some of the principal offices of

state. Frequent dispatches from him came to the King of Portugal, who, on his part, spared no expense to keep open the correspondence. But the Cape of Good Hope was at length doubled, and Covillan and Abyssinia were for a time forgotten. During two reigns, Covillan remained without any intercourse with Portugal. On the accession of David III., an infant, to the throne of Abyssinia, his mother, the queen regent, bethought herself of applying to the King of Portugal by means of an ambassador, bearing letters written by Covillan, for assistance in a war with the Moors. The Portuguese say that the empress offered one-third of her kingdom to the King of Portugal as the price of his aid. Mateo, or Matthew, an Armenian merchant, was chosen as the bearer of these dispatches ; but it was not till a good many years had passed, and many dangers and difficulties had been encountered, that he succeeded in reaching the Portuguese court. The King of Portugal received him with every mark of honour, and in return sent an embassy to Abyssinia.

Don Roderigo de Lima, the ambassador, with a numerous retinue, landed at Masuah in 1520. As the king was in the southern part of his dominions, the embassy had to cross the whole extent of the empire. The journey was one of immense difficulty. Their way lay through woods and over mountains, full of savage beasts and men still more savage, intersected by large rivers, and deluged by the tropical rains. Sometimes they passed through dreary deserts, affording no sustenance for man or beast ; sometimes they had to force their way through dense woods, where thorns and briers tore their clothes and their flesh ; terrible precipices and ravines yawned in their path ; mountains over mountains reared before them their black, naked peaks, that seemed as if calcined by the rays of a burning sun, and by the

incessant lightning to which they were exposed ; and beasts of prey came forth from their dens, and seemed only to be hindered from devouring them by their wonder at seeing so many men together in their unfrequented solitudes. In the course of this journey, Matthew, the Armenian, and a servant of Don Roderigo died. After undergoing much fatigue and hardship, the Portuguese embassy succeeded at length, six months after landing in Abyssinia, in reaching the king at Shoa.

The king of Abyssinia disavowed Matthew's embassy, which had been the work of his mother, and gave the Portuguese ambassador only an indifferent reception. With the air of a man who had suffered an injury, he informed Roderigo that he was accustomed to receive presents of value from strangers coming on such missions. Don Roderigo replied with warmth, that the kings of Portugal were not in the habit of sending presents, having no superior on earth ; that he had met with treatment which, as a nobleman and a soldier, though he had been no ambassador at all, he was no way disposed to endure ; and, therefore, he demanded immediate liberty to depart. This he did not obtain, but the king appears after this to have treated him with more consideration. For five years Don Roderigo was detained in Abyssinia, and he was only at length permitted to depart when the king thought it expedient to send an embassy to Portugal. Two members of the embassy were, however, forcibly detained, to marry and settle down in the country, like poor Peter Covillan. Zaga Zaab, an Abyssinian monk, who had learned Portuguese by waiting on Don Roderigo, was chosen to accompany him, as the representative of the king of Abyssinia.

This embassy arrived safely at Lisbon, and was received with great distinction by King John. Zaggä Zaab, pleased with the

magnificence in which he lived, was in no hurry to bring his mission to a conclusion ; and five or six years passed without there being any communication between the two courts. After this interval, Mark, the aged Abuna of Abyssinia, died, appointing as his successor, by the king's desire, John Bermudez, one of the Portuguese who had been detained in Abyssinia, after Don Roderigo's mission. John very willingly consented to be ordained to the office, provided the Pope approved of it ; and the king, agreed to his setting out for Europe, charging him at the same time with a mission to the court of Portugal, to ask assistance in his war with the Moors. He arrived without accident at Rome, and was confirmed by Paul III., as patriarch, not only of Abyssinia, but also of Alexandria. The Pope was so well pleased with the homage shown him by a country so distant, and hitherto connected with the Greek Church, that he bestowed upon Bermudez the additional, though incomprehensible, title of "Patriarch of the Sea." The Abuna then presented himself at Lisbon, where one of his first acts was to give the Portuguese a specimen of Abyssinian discipline, by putting Zaga Zaab in irons, for having wasted so much time, without effecting any of the purposes of his embassy.

Bermudez succeeded in persuading the king of Portugal to send a body of four hundred troops to the assistance of the Abyssinians ; but eventually, a somewhat larger number of Portuguese soldiers landed at Masuah, under the command of Don Christopher de Gama. The war with the Moors had commenced ; and it was the policy of Gragné, the Moorish general, to prevent a junction between the forces of Don Christopher and those of the king. The two armies came in sight of each other at Ainal, a small village in the country of the Baharnagash, on the 25th of March.



and, without delay, proclaim it as the established religion of Abyssinia. With this demand the young king refused to comply. Hitherto Abyssinia had been remarkably free from religious discord. The Abyssinians heard the Portuguese mass with reverence and attention ; and the Portuguese, in their turn, were frequently to be seen worshipping in the Abyssinian churches. They intermarried, and their children seem to have been baptized, sometimes by the ministers of the one church, and sometimes by those of the other. But this harmonious state of things was brought to an end by the bigoted policy of Bermudez.

The king's objections seem to have been more against Bermudez, personally, than against his religion. An Abyssinian biographer of Claudius says, that he was at heart a Roman Catholic, though he so stoutly resisted in public the anointed of the Pope ; and it is recorded that, on the new Abuna refusing him permission to read a book written by Bermudez, on the differences between the Greek and Roman Churches, the young king flew into a violent passion, and called him Mahometan and infidel to his face. Bermudez, after several ineffectual attempts to secure for the Roman Catholic religion an ascendancy in Abyssinia, at length gave up the unequal struggle, and with his barren titles returned to Portugal, where he died many years afterwards.

About this time Ignatius Loyola, founder of the order of Jesuits, turned his eyes towards Abyssinia, as a fitting field for the missions of the Church of Rome. Nugnez Baretto, one of the fraternity, was accordingly appointed patriarch of Abyssinia, —the previous appointment of John Bermudez, who was still alive, being quietly ignored. On reaching Goa, Baretto heard of the steady aversion of Claudius to the Roman Church, and, not

wishing to risk his patriarchal dignity, he sent Andreas Oviedo, bishop of Hierapolis, and Melchior Carneyro, bishop of Nice, with several other priests, as ambassadors to the court of Abyssinia. Little came of this mission. The king, who had been in hopes that the new comers were soldiers, who would help him to fight his battles, was grievously disappointed to find that they were priests. Before long there was a renewal of the scenes which had passed between him and the "Patriarch of the Sea;" and the king, who found he could not vanquish his opponents with arguments, naturally resorted to the only other weapons at his disposal. He caused Oviedo (who became patriarch on the death of Baretto) to be violently beaten, and banished to a desert mountain, the other priests sharing in his disgrace.

The Catholic religion seemed on the point of dying out in Abyssinia, when, in 1600, Peter Paez, the most accomplished and successful missionary that ever entered Ethiopia, arrived at Masuah, after suffering a long imprisonment among the Turks, and undergoing many hardships and dangers. Instead of pressing on at once to court, as his predecessors had done, he set himself steadily to master the Geez language. He also set up a school; and soon the great progress made by his pupils spread abroad the reputation of their master. He was summoned to court, where he presented himself in April 1604, and was received by the king with the same honours which were paid to his own nobles. The Abyssinian monks viewed these honours with great jealousy, foreseeing that the exaltation of Peter would infallibly lead to their humiliation. This consummation was nearer than they expected, for the next day, in a theological dispute with them before the king, Paez produced two of his pupils, who completely vanquished their monkish antagonists.

Mass was then said according to the Romish ritual, followed by a sermon, which was among the first ever preached in Abyssinia. The king was so taken with Peter's sermon, that he resolved to embrace the Roman Catholic religion. He issued a proclamation, forbidding the religious observance of Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath ; and sent letters to Pope Clement VII., and to Philip III. of Spain, offering his friendship, and asking for mechanics to assist, and Jesuits to teach his people.

Many of the courtiers followed the king's example ; but a strong party was formed against him, and many, whose loyalty had been of a doubtful description, became all at once exceedingly zealous for a religion, to the interests of which they had hitherto been perfectly indifferent. The Abuna excommunicated the king, declaring him, and all who should support him, accursed. A battle was fought, in which the king, deserted by his own troops, and with too few Portuguese to meet the overwhelming attack of his enemies, was surrounded and slain. Thus perished Za Denghel, the first Abyssinian king who publicly embraced the Romish religion.

Za Denghel was succeeded by Jacob, his nephew, and son of the preceding monarch. Jacob, however, had scarcely assumed the title when he was defeated and slain by Socinios, cousin of Za Denghel, a man of great energy and ability. Shortly after he ascended the throne, Socinios, who, on mounting the throne, took the name of Melec Segued, sent for Peter Paez to court, where, after the usual disputes between him and the Abyssinian clergy, mass was said, and a sermon preached, with much the same success as in the time of Za Denghel. Paez turned the royal favour to good account. He asked from the king a portion of *the territory* of Dembea, a very fertile, but very unhealthy pro-

vince, lying round the lake Tzana. The tract of land on which Paez fixed his desires is the only part of Dembea which is not subject to the malignant fevers that rage for eight months of the year. It is a peninsula running into the lake on its south sides, moderately elevated above the water, with a delightful climate, and commanding splendid views of the lake and the distant mountains. The king readily granted his request, and Peter began forthwith to build a monastery. The Abyssinians saw with astonishment the erection of a stately building of stone and lime ; and their wonder was increased, when Paez commenced, on a still grander scale, a palace for the king. Storey rose above storey ; the interior was wainscoted with cedar, and divided into state rooms and private apartments ; Paez doing the greater part of the work with his own hands, being at once architect, mason, smith, and carpenter.

Many wars and troubles followed. An impostor, declaring himself to be Jacob, the king who was understood to have been slain in battle, but whose body had not been found, appeared in the mountains of Habab, near Masuah, and soon rallied a large army to his standard. This rebellion had not been well put down, when fresh wars broke out. Gideon, king of the Jews, espoused the cause of Amdo, another claimant of the name and title of the late king Jacob, and defeated one of the generals of Socinios, who had been sent against him. Socinios himself hurried to the scene of war, and succeeded in storming some of the strongest fortresses of the Falasha ; whereupon Gideon was glad to obtain peace by delivering up Amdo, who was immediately put to death. Shortly after this, by order of the king, a treacherous attack was made upon the Falasha, in many districts of the empire. Men, women, and children were put to the sword ; and

the few who were spared were forced to renounce their religion, and be baptized. The Galla, too, were more troublesome than usual in this reign. They made frequent inroads upon Abyssinia ; and the king, in his turn, was not slow in sending expeditions against them. In these struggles he was not always wholly successful ; on one occasion his favourite son and two of his best officers were slain, and their army dispersed.

Religious troubles also began to arise. Socinios, induced probably by expectations of assistance from Europe, resolved to renounce the Alexandrian faith, and send letters of submission to the Pope. As a preliminary measure to this change in the established religion, he decreed penalties on those who held the Abyssinian\* doctrine of the nature of Christ ; and declared it unlawful to observe Saturday, the ancient Jewish Sabbath. These measures were the pretext, if they were not the cause, of serious insurrections, which the king had great difficulty in suppressing. Immediately after his victory over the rebels, Socinios threw off the mask, and openly professed the Romish religion. Peter Paez, who was present at this public act, regarded the great work of his life as accomplished, and returned home, singing, *Nunc dimittis*.† Shortly afterwards (3d May 1623) he died of a fever, brought on by the fatigues of his journey.

Alphonso Mendez, a Jesuit doctor of divinity, and a man of great learning, was ordained at Lisbon on the 25th of May 1624, as the successor of Paez, and reached Abyssinia in the following

\* The Abyssinian Christians became Monophysites in the ninth century. They deny the orthodox doctrine that there are two distinct natures in Christ—the divine and the human ; and hold that the divine and the human natures so coalesce as to become *one*.

† “ Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.”—Luke ii. 29, 30.

year. The work of Paez was completed by Mendez. On the 11th of February 1626, the king of Abyssinia took a solemn oath of submission to the see of Rome. This vain and ridiculous ceremony was celebrated with all the pageantry of a heathen festival. The new patriarch preached a sermon in Portuguese, upon the primacy of the chair of St. Peter, full of Latin quotations, which is said to have had a wonderful effect on the king, who did not understand one word either of Latin or Portuguese ! An address was delivered in reply by one of the king's nobles in Amharic, which was equally thrown away upon the Jesuit doctor of divinity and his brethren. This over, Socinios, on his knees, took the following oath :—

“ We, Sultan Segued, emperor of Ethiopia, do believe and confess that St. Peter, prince of the apostles, was constituted, by Christ our Lord, head of the whole Christian Church ; and that he gave him the principality and dominion over the whole world, by saying to him, ‘ Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church ; and I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven.’ And again, when he said, ‘ Feed my sheep.’ Also we believe and confess, that the Pope of Rome, lawfully elected, is the true successor of St. Peter, the apostle, in government ; that he holdeth the same power, dignity, and primacy, in the whole Christian Church ; and to the holy father Urban, eighth of that name, by the mercy of God, Pope, and our Lord, and to his successor in the government of the Church, we do promise, offer, and swear true obedience, and subject with humility at his feet, our person and empire ; so help us God, and these holy gospels.”

Socinios and Mendez carried things with a high hand. The king issued proclamations requiring all persons intended for

priests to embrace the Catholic religion, on pain of death, and enjoining the observance of Easter and Lent, after the form of the Church of Rome, under the same penalty. The prelate re-ordained the Abyssinian clergy, consecrated their churches, and rebaptized men and women as well as children. The forms and tenets of the Alexandrian faith were rejected, and those of the Church of Rome set up in their place ; offensive claims of jurisdiction in civil matters began to be made ; and sentences of excommunication were freely used against those who were disobedient to the injunctions of the priests.

All this naturally led to a reaction. A spirit of discontent became general throughout the kingdom ; and the king, in order to lessen or remove it, desired Mendez to permit the use of the ancient liturgies of Ethiopia, with such alterations as he thought necessary. With this the patriarch was obliged to comply, as it was reasonable that men should pray to God in a language they understood. The concession was a fatal one for the interests of the Church of Rome ; for no sooner was permission given to use their own liturgies, than the Abyssinians universally returned to them, and used their old prayers and services, without any of the patriarch's alterations. The partizans of the old religion gained courage from this success, and steadily continued their efforts for the subversion of the Roman Catholic faith. Presently the country became the scene of a war, in which fanaticism added fresh bitterness to the hatred of the contending parties. The rebels avowed the war to be a religious one ; and Socinios was equally resolved, on his part, to uphold the religion he had so solemnly professed. His usual good fortune attended him, and, though on several occasions he met with severe losses, he signally defeated his enemies in repeated engagements.

One morning Socinios went out with his son to view the field upon which, on the preceding day, he had gained a great victory. The prince, pointing to the mangled bodies which strewed the plain, addressed his father in these terms: "These men, whom you see slaughtered on the ground, were neither Pagans nor Mahometans, at whose death we should rejoice—they were Christians, lately your subjects and your countrymen, some of them your relations. This is not a victory which is gained over ourselves. In killing these, you drive the sword into your own entrails. How many men have you slaughtered? How many more have you to kill? We are become a proverb, even among the Pagans and Moors, for carrying on this war, and for apostatizing, as they say, from the faith of our ancestors!"

These words sank into the king's heart. He saw the folly of persisting in this unnatural contest, and the likelihood of its eventually alienating from him the allegiance of his subjects. Wishing to satisfy both parties, he proposed to Mendez that full religious toleration should be granted to Alexandrians and Catholics alike. Mendez insisted that they who had embraced the Catholic faith should not be permitted to renounce it; but agreed that all others should be at liberty to live in the faith of their ancestors. This concession did not meet the requirements of the case, and Socinios, exhausted by the labours of a long reign, resolved at once to transfer the government into the more vigorous hands of his son. Accordingly, on the 14th of June 1632, he issued the following proclamation:—"Hear us! hear us! hear us! First of all, we gave you the Roman Catholic faith, as thinking it a good one; but many people have died fighting against it, and lastly these rude peasants of Lasta. Now, therefore, we restore to you the faith of your ancestors; let your own



priests say their mass in their own churches ; let the people have their own altars for the sacrament, and their own liturgy, and be happy ! As for myself, I am now old, and worn out with war and infirmities, and no longer capable of governing : I name my son, Facilidas, to reign in my stead."

Thus, in one day, fell the whole fabric of the Roman Catholic faith and hierarchy in Abyssinia. Socinios, who remained a Roman Catholic to the last, did not long survive his resignation of the throne. He died on the 7th of September 1632.

Facilidas carried out vigorously the work which was begun by his father. He at once gave Mendez notice to quit the country. The patriarch tried to avert the blow by offering large concessions, but was sternly informed that it was too late. He and his companions were ordered to depart immediately out of the kingdom, and were conducted to Fremona by a party of soldiers. There they managed to make their escape, and put themselves under the protection of the Baharnagash, who was then in rebellion. They hoped to remain with him until assistance should reach them from Spain or India ; for, rather than renounce their hold of Abyssinia, they were willing to deluge it with blood. The king wrote to the Baharnagash, promising him forgiveness of his rebellion, if he would deliver up the priests. The Baharnagash replied that he could not with honour deliver up his guests ; but he was willing to sell them to the Turks ! which was accordingly done.\*

\* The priests, after enduring many sufferings, were ransomed for 4300 crowns. Jerome Lobo, one of their number, quoted in a note on a preceding page, wrote an account of this mission to Abyssinia. A translation of his book was published by Dr. Samuel Johnson. With an evident reference to Bruce, upon whom, though his "Travels" were not yet published, numerous attacks had been already made by the critics, Dr. Johnson says, that his

Amid the very general regret felt at Rome when these events became known, it was thought by some that the failure of the mission to Abyssinia was caused by the pride, obstinacy, and violence of the Jesuits. It was therefore determined to send six Capuchins, of the reformed order of St. Francis, all of them Frenchmen, to endeavour to win back Abyssinia to the faith. This new mission closed summarily and tragically. Two of the Capuchins attempted to enter Abyssinia from the Indian Ocean, but were murdered by the Galla after they had advanced a short way into the country. Two were stoned to death after they had, with much difficulty, succeeded in penetrating into Abyssinia. The remaining two, hearing at Masuah of the fate of their companions, prudently relinquished the attempt to gain a footing in a country that so little appreciated their services, and returned home with the tidings of their ill-success.

Another attempt was made by the Church of Rome to regain author "appears, by his modest and unaffected narration, to have described things as he saw them, to have copied nature from the life, and to have consulted his senses, not his imagination; he meets with no basilisks that destroy with their eyes, his crocodiles devour their prey without tears, and his cataracts fall from the rocks without deafening the neighbouring inhabitants. The reader will here find no regions cursed with irremediable barrenness, or blest with spontaneous fecundity, no perpetual gloom or unceasing sunshine; nor are the nations here described either devoid of all sense of humanity or consummate in all private and social virtues," etc. Bruce was able to retort upon Dr. Johnson with some effect, that the author whom he thus lauds is by no means destitute of stories as improbable as those to which he ironically refers in the above extract. He gives as an example, Lobo's narration of his narrow escape from being killed by the *breath* of a serpent, which kills at a distance of four yards by simply ejecting a volume of poisonous air from its mouth. Father Jerome felt a violent pain, but escaped by not being within the fatal distance!

her position in Abyssinia. Three other Capuchins were commissioned to undertake the hazardous service. They sent information to Facilidas, of their intention to visit his dominions; whereupon the king wrote to the basha of Suakem, recommending him to receive them according to their merits. The basha took the hint, and immediately on their arrival cut off their heads; and stripping the skins from their faces and skulls, sent them to the king. Thus ended the last attempt of the Church of Rome to convert Abyssinia to the "Catholic faith."\*

After an eventful reign of thirty-three years, Facilidas died in 1665, and was succeeded by his son, of whom nothing is recorded, except that he bestowed a great deal of time and attention on the affairs and controversies of the Church, with what result, history saith not. The next king was Yasous, styled "the Great." He made numerous successful expeditions against the Agows, the Galla, and the Shangalla, and conducted matters at home, in church and state, with firmness and discretion. Being afflicted with a scorbutic complaint, he sent to Cairo for a physician; and, accordingly, Charles Poncet, a Frenchman, set out for Abyssinia in June 1698. He was accompanied by Father Brevedent, a Jesuit, disguised as his servant, who, however, was destined never to reach Gondar. He died at a village called Barcos, about half a day's journey from the capital. Poncet

\* There were still numerous priests in Nubia, chiefly Franciscans and Capuchins, to whom the Church of Rome looked for taking advantage of any opportunity of regaining her supremacy in Abyssinia. Bruce thinks that it was at the instigation of some of these monks that M. du Roule was murdered.—(See p. 107.) They were jealous of his embassy, as being under the direction of the Jesuits, and an interference with the work assigned to them by the Pope. The tragical fate of three of these priests is related in a subsequent

\* of this chapter (p. 111).

reached Gondar in safety, and in a very short time succeeded in working a complete cure upon his royal patient. On his return he published an account of his journey, and was violently assailed by the Jesuits and others, for not having taken advantage of his visit to the court of Abyssinia, to prevail on the nobles of the nation to send an embassy of some dozen or score of their sons to France, with the view of their ultimately returning, imbued with the religion of the Roman Catholic Church ! The scheme was too chimerical and absurd to deserve any serious attention.

An attempt was made, four years afterwards, to establish friendly political and commercial relations between France and Abyssinia ; and M. de Maillet, French consul at Cairo, the chief of Poncet's critics, was fixed upon as ambassador. Upon his declining the office, M. Noir du Roule, vice-consul at Damietta, was appointed to it, and set out from Cairo in July 1704. His embassy was looked upon with great aversion by the Franciscans and Capuchins, who thought they ought to have a monopoly of the Ethiopic mission ; and it is probably to their secret intrigues that its tragical end is to be traced. Du Roule had reached Sennaar, where he halted for some days, and was received with some consideration by the king. His refusal, however, to comply with a demand of three thousand dollars on the part of the king, wrought a change in his majesty's disposition towards him. As Du Roule and his attendants, after several vexatious delays, were at length on the point of leaving Sennaar, on their journey towards Abyssinia, they were surrounded, in the large square before the king's house, and all barbarously murdered.

The king of Abyssinia, who had sent letters in favour of Du Roule, was so exasperated, on hearing of his assassination, that he resolved to inflict vengeance on Sennaar, as soon as he had

his army in a proper state for the expedition. In the meantime, thinking that the basha of Cairo had something to do with the death of M. du Roule, he wrote to him a letter, of which the following is a translation :—

“ To the Pacha, and Lords of the Militia of Cairo.

“ On the part of the King of Abyssinia, the King Tecla Haimanout, son of the King of the Church of Abyssinia.

“ On the part of the august king, the powerful arbiter of nations, shadow of God upon earth, the guide of kings who profess the religion of the Messiah, the most powerful of all Christian kings, he who maintains order between Mahometans and Christians, protector of the confines of Alexandria, observer of the commandments of the Gospel, heir from father to son of a most powerful kingdom, descended of the family of David and Solomon—may the blessing of Israel be upon our prophet, and upon them ! may his happiness be durable, and his greatness lasting ; and may his powerful army be always feared ! To the most powerful lord, elevated by his dignity, venerable by his merits, distinguished by his strength and riches among all Mahometans, the refuge of all those that reverence him, who by his prudence governs and directs the armies of the noble empire, and commands his confines ; victorious Viceroy of Egypt, the four corners of which shall always be respected and defended—So be it ! And to all the distinguished princes, judges, men of learning, and other officers, whose business it is to maintain order and good government, and to all commanders in general—may God preserve them all in their dignities, in the nobleness of their health ! You are to know, that our ancestors never bore any envy to other kings, nor did they ever occasion them any trouble.

or show them any mark of hatred. On the contrary, they have upon all occasions given them proofs of their friendship, assisting them generously, relieving them in their necessities, as well in what concerns the caravan and pilgrims of Mecca in Arabia Felix, as in the Indies, in Persia, and other distant and out of the way places—also, by protecting distinguished persons in every urgent necessity.

“ Nevertheless, when the King of France, our brother, who professes our religion and our law, having been induced thereto by some advances of friendship on our part such as are proper, sent an ambassador to us—I understand that you caused arrest him at Sennaar ; and also another, by name Murat, the Syrian, whom likewise you did put in prison, though he was sent to that ambassador on our part ; and by thus doing, you have violated the law of nations ; as ambassadors of kings ought to be at liberty to go whenever they will ; and it is a general obligation to treat them with honour, and not to molest or detain them ; nor should they be subject to pay customs or any sort of presents. We could very soon repay you in kind, if we were inclined to revenge the insult you have offered to the man, Murat, sent on our part. The Nile would be sufficient to punish you, since God hath put into our power his fountain, his outlet and his increase, and that we can dispose of the same to do you harm ; for the present, we demand of and exhort you to desist from any future vexations towards our envoys, and not disturb us by detaining those who shall be sent towards you ; but you shall let them pass, and continue their route without delay, coming and going wherever they will, freely for their own advantage, whether they are our subjects or Frenchmen ; and whatever you shall do to or for them, we shall regard as done to or for ourselves.”

The address is—"To the Basha, Princes, and Lords governing the town of Great Cairo; may God favour them with his goodness."

Tecla Haimanout had not an opportunity of carrying out any scheme of revenge for the murder of the French ambassador. Another project, nearer to his heart—that of appointing his mother Iteghé (queen regent, in the event of his death), and gradually removing out of the way the old officers of the late King Yasous—caused a conspiracy to be formed against him. He was assassinated, while on a hunting expedition, in the year 1706.

On the death of Tiflis, the next king, in 1709, after a reign of three years, in which there were no events worthy of the attention of the historian, the crown was usurped by a nobleman of the name of Oustas. Abyssinia now saw, for the second time,\* a stranger seated on the throne of Solomon. Oustas had every quality of mind and body requisite for the king of such a country: the only objection to his assuming the crown being that he was not of the line in which, by the unalterable constitution drawn up by the Queen of Sheba, the sovereignty was to continue. He was fond of field sports, and endeavoured, by keeping his nobles occupied with these, and by a judicious distribution of his favours, to guard against disaffection to his rule. The people, however, began to long for the restoration of the ancient royal line; and, on Oustas falling ill, the army revolted, proclaiming David, son of the late king Yasous, as King of Abyssinia. The revolution was rapid and bloodless. Whether Oustas was allowed to die in peace, or whether his end was hastened by the com-

\* The first interruption occurred in the year 960. See page 88.

mand of the new king, does not appear. His death took place on the 10th of February 1714.

The reign of David, the fourth of that name, was brief and stormy. Several Roman Catholic priests, who had made their way into Abyssinia from Nubia, were apprehended and brought to trial. Their examination was short and summary. The priests were asked if they received the council of Chalcedon, and believed that Leo the Great lawfully presided at it, as the head of the Catholic Church.\* On their answering firmly that they did, the multitude furiously demanded their instant punishment; whereupon the judges delivered them into the hands of the mob, who at once stoned them to death. The priests of the Abyssinian Church, when they had no common enemy to attack, fell out with each other, as is frequently the case in ecclesiastical bodies. They were divided into two parties, either of which denounced the other as heretical. During the present reign, a furious contention arose between these two sects on some obscure point of doctrine. The king, enraged at the noisy and turbulent behaviour of one of these parties of monks, who were parading the streets of Gondar, ordered a body of Galla troops to punish them. These barbarians readily undertook the work, and so busily and indiscriminately did they use their swords, that Gondar next day presented the aspect of a city taken by storm. This bloody massacre produced a feeling of exasperation against the king, both

\* At the fourth general council held at Chalcedon, over which Leo the Great presided, the doctrine of Eutyches, the originator of the heresy of the Monophysites, was condemned, and Dioscorus, Bishop of Alexandria, was condemned, deposed, and banished. This council was held in 451. It is the last of the four great *ecumenical councils* whose doctrinal decisions are accepted, not merely by the Roman and Greek churches, but also by Protestants.



within and without the palace. A dose of poison was administered to him by some of his attendants ; and Bacuffa, son of Yasous, reigned in his stead.

Bacuffa was a very superstitious man. Having been informed by a priest, who pretended to skill in soothsaying, that he should have a son, but that a Welleta Georgis would govern the kingdom after him for thirty years, he set to work to defeat the prediction by secretly putting to death multitudes of persons bearing that name—a common one in Abyssinia. His queen had a son sure enough within the year. The council named the child Yasous, after his grandfather ; and this circumstance recalled to the king's mind the sinister prediction which had caused him to shed so much blood. He bethought himself of a scheme whereby the true Welleta Georgis might be induced to show himself. Having appointed his wife Iteghé, he pretended to fall sick. Several days passed without hopes of recovery, and at last news were published of his death. The joy of the people was universal ; no one tried to conceal it. Equally great was their consternation when, on the day appointed for his burial, the king reappeared in his usual place on the seat of justice. Bacuffa saw that, if he were to continue his old policy, he must be prepared to exterminate his subjects, as the disaffection to his harsh rule was evidently universal. He promptly resolved to proclaim a general amnesty ; and, summoning all his principal men to the palace, he made them a speech, in which, after excusing his severe acts as necessary, he said that order being now established, he had counterfeited death, to signify that an end was put to Bacuffa and his bloody measures. He was now risen again, and appeared to them by the name of Atzham Georgis, and the new reign would be one of peace

and clemency. Bacuffa died in 1729, after a vigorous reign of ten years.

Yasous II. was the next king. In the beginning of his reign he had to put down a somewhat formidable rebellion, in which even the Abuna joined, by issuing against him a sentence of excommunication. The leader of the rebels fell into the hands of the king, who at once ordered him to be hanged on a daroo tree in front of the palace, between two of his most confidential counsellors. The Abuna excused himself for excommunicating the king, on the ground that he had received information of his having become a Roman Catholic, and was pardoned on making a public recantation of the sentence. Having restored order throughout his dominions, Yasous II. undertook an expedition against the kingdom of Sennaar, with the view of accomplishing what had been a favourite project of Socinios—the re-establishment of the authority of the kings of Abyssinia over the Shepherds, their ancient vassals. This campaign ended very disastrously. An army of 18,000 men was almost annihilated; and all the sacred relics which the Abyssinians carry about with their armies to insure victory, fell into the hands of the enemy, and were carried in triumph to Sennaar.\*

Shortly after this, Suhul Michael, governor of Tigré, destined in the subsequent reigns, and during my residence in Abyssinia, to act a very prominent part in public affairs, being summoned to present himself at Gondar, to meet some charge made against him, returned an absolute refusal to the king's messengers. The king collected an army, and promptly marched against him. Michael, disconcerted by the rapidity of the king's movements,

\* The relics were recovered, on payment of 8000 ounces of gold, by way of ransom.

and seeing resistance vain, capitulated, and was pardoned on the intercession of the noblemen attending the king. In a war with Sennaar, in which Yasous subsequently engaged to wipe off the disgrace of his previous defeat, Michael rendered good service ; and from this period it became evident that he was a rising man.

Yasous II. died in 1753, and was succeeded by Joas, his son by his second wife, Wobit, who was a Galla. The marriage of Yasous with this woman was a thing entirely unprecedented in Abyssinia. Between the Galla and the Abyssinians there existed an implacable enmity, intensified by numberless acts of violence and bloodshed on either side. The marriage, therefore, was not one which gave much satisfaction to the Abyssinians. When the young king began to call his Galla relatives to court, and to promote them to positions of influence, great dissensions broke out. The removal of Mariam Barea, a nobleman of high rank, from the government of the province of Begemder, to make way for Kasmati Brulhé, an uncle of the king, led to a rebellion in that district. Brulhé perished in battle, while attempting to establish himself in his government. King Joas, hearing of this calamity, which was attended with the slaughter of a large number of Galla soldiers, declared that there was no safety but in Suhul Michael, who was immediately sent for, and invested with the dignity of Ras, or prime minister, with supreme power, both civil and military. Michael had foreseen this result, and was prepared for it. He at once marched to Gondar, where, by his vigorous measures, he succeeded in re-establishing order and public confidence. In the expedition against Begemder, which was thoroughly successful, he acted with a freedom and a disregard to the wishes and opinions of Joas, which highly offended that weak ruler. Mariam Barea was slain ; and his wife cast

herself at the feet of Michael, offering him her hand, and asking his protection for her children from the ferocity of the Galla. Michael at once marshalled his troops, and, sending for a priest, was married at the door of his tent, amid the acclamations of the whole army, to Ozoro Esther, the newly-made widow. The shouts of the soldiers were the first intimation to the king of what had happened ; and he expressed his displeasure in very strong language, which was officiously reported to Michael, and served to make him only the more resolved upon carrying out his schemes. The breach between the king and Michael gradually widened. Joas, who had taken as his confidential adviser Waragna Fasil, a Galla chieftain, sent peremptory orders to Michael to return to Tigré. Michael refused, declaring that he was now governor of the whole realm, called to prevent the ruin of the country, which the king could not do. Fasil, who refused to submit to Michael's authority, was declared by the judges guilty of rebellion, and deprived of his offices. After a long private audience with the king, Fasil withdrew with his troops, and took up a position where he could intercept the supplies coming to Gondar from the south. The king secretly took part with Fasil, though he openly held aloof. A battle was fought at Azazo, in which Fasil was completely defeated ; and among the prisoners taken were some of the king's slaves, who said that they and a considerable body of household troops had been ordered by the king to join Fasil's army. This sealed the fate of Joas, who was assassinated the same evening.

Hannes, a man past seventy, brother to Bacuffa, succeeded. He had not reigned six months when Michael, finding that the old man positively refused to march with the army against Fasil, had him removed out of the way by poison.

Tecla Haimanout succeeded his father, and entered heartily into Michael's views, marching against Fasil, who was now stronger than ever, and signally defeating him at Fagitta, on the 9th of December 1769.

While these last-mentioned events were occurring, I was on my way from Masuah to Gondar.

## CHAPTER VII.

### *Manners and Customs of the Abyssinians.*

THE crown of Abyssinia is hereditary, and has always been so, in one particular family, supposed to be that of Solomon, by the Queen of Sheba. It is, nevertheless, elective in that line ; and there is no law or custom which gives the eldest son an exclusive title to succeed his father. The practice, indeed, has been quite the contrary. When, at the death of a king, his sons are old enough to govern, and, by some accident, not yet sent prisoners to the mountain, then the eldest generally takes possession of the throne, by the strength of his father's friends. But if no heir is then in the low country, the choice of the king is always according to the will of the minister, which passes for that of the people ; and, his inclination and interest being to govern, he seldom fails to choose an infant, during whose minority he enjoys absolute authority over the kingdom. From this flow all the misfortunes of this unhappy country. This very defect arises from the desire to institute a more than ordinarily perfect form of government ; for the first position laid down by the Abyssinians was, "Woe to thee, O land, when thy king is a child!"\* and this they knew must often happen, when succession is left to the course of nature. But when there was a choice to be made out of 200 persons, all of the same family, all capable

\* Eccles. x. 16.

of reigning, it was their own fault, they thought, if they had not always a prince of proper age and qualifications to rule the kingdom. This reasoning, good at the first view, has been found fallacious, and the consequences of it have been often ruinous.

The king is anointed with plain oil of olives. The crown is made in the shape of a priest's mitre or head-piece, and, like a helmet, covers the king's forehead, cheeks, and neck. It is lined with blue taffety; the outside is beautiful filigree work of gold and silver. The king goes regularly to church, his guards taking possession of every avenue and door through which he has to pass, and nobody is allowed to enter with him, because he is then on foot, excepting two officers of his bed-chamber, who support him. He kisses the threshold and side-posts of the church door, and the steps before the altar, and then returns home. Sometimes there is service in the church, and sometimes there is not; but he takes no notice of the difference. He rides up-stairs, into the presence-chamber, on a mule, and alights on the carpet before his throne.

An officer, bearing the title of Serach Massery, begins cracking a long whip, making a noise worse than that of twenty French postilions, before the palace, every morning before dawn. This chases away the hyænas and other wild beasts, and is a signal for the king's rising. The first thing the king does is to sit in judgment, which he does fasting. About eight o'clock he goes to breakfast.

There are seven noblemen who act as lords-in-waiting, or gentlemen of the bed-chamber, to the king, and are in a degree of familiarity with him, unknown to the rest of his subjects. The chief of them is styled, Azeleffa el Camisha, or groom of the robe.

When the king sits, to consult upon civil matters of consequence,

he is shut up in a kind of box, opposite to the head of the council table. The persons that deliberate sit at the table, and give their opinion according to their rank, the youngest or lowest officer always speaking first. When the different grades of councillors, beginning with the Shalaka, or colonels of the household troops, and ending with the Ras, or prime minister, have given their votes, the king delivers his sentence, which is final. It is sent to the table, from the place where he is sitting, by means of an officer, who is called Kal-Hatzé, or "the voice of the king."

There is, in various respects, a similarity between the customs of Abyssinia and ancient Persia, especially in such matters as regard the king and court. In Abyssinia it is a fundamental law, that no member of the royal family who has any deformity or bodily defect shall be allowed to succeed to the crown; and any of the princes who escape from the mountain Wachné, and are afterwards retaken, are punished with mutilation in some part of the body, that thus they may be disqualified from ever succeeding. In Persia, the same rule was observed. An instance is mentioned by Procopius, of the son of Cabades being excluded from the throne of Persia, because he was blind of one eye.

Formerly the kings of Abyssinia were seldom seen by their subjects, though the troubles of subsequent times forced them often to break through this usage; and in this respect again, the custom is similar to that of ancient Persia. This gave rise in both countries to absurd usages. In Persia it produced two officers, the one called "the king's eyes," the other, "the king's ears;" and in Abyssinia, as has been seen, it created an officer called "the king's mouth, or voice."

The kings of Abyssinia are above all law; so were those of



Persia. In both countries the monarch married as many wives as he chose ; but one was dignified above the others by the title of queen. In both countries the salutation of a subject to his sovereign was prostration. A white fillet, worn round the forehead, was, in both countries, a mark of sovereignty. In both countries it was high treason for any one to sit on the king's seat. It is a constant practice in Abyssinia to beset the king's doors, within his hearing, and cry for justice in as loud and lamentable tones as possible. Often a set of vagrants howl in this way, though they have no real grievance to complain of ; and they will tell you that they do it in honour of the king, that he may not be lonely by his palace being too quiet ! Several times I was annoyed with these doleful lamentations at my own door, and found, on sending to ask what was the matter, that there was nothing wrong, but it was intended as a compliment to me before the people. The idle vagabonds accompanied their explanation with a request that I would order them drink, that they might continue with a little more spirit. Herodotus tells us that in Persia the people used to come in great crowds, roaring and crying in the same way, to the doors of the palace.

In Abyssinia, when a prisoner is condemned to death, the sentence is immediately executed. Among the capital punishments of this country are : crucifixion, flaying alive, and stoning, all of which, as well as the practice of the instant execution of the sentence, we find to have been common in Persia. The barbarous punishment of plucking out the eyes, which we know to have prevailed in Persia, is at the present time frequently inflicted in Abyssinia. This is a cruelty which I but too often saw committed during my short stay in the country. It is commonly inflicted upon rebels.

The bodies of criminals slain for treason and murder are seldom buried in Abyssinia. The streets of Gondar are strewn with pieces of their carcasses, which bring the wild beasts in multitudes into the city as soon as it is dark, so that it is unsafe to walk in the night. In this respect, again, Abyssinia resembles ancient Persia.

Notwithstanding all these points of similarity, however, there is not the slightest foundation for the idea that the Abyssinians were originally a colony of Persians. The Abyssinians, beyond doubt, are of the same stock as the ancient Egyptians; and some similarities between them and the Egyptians can still be traced. The customs mentioned as peculiar to Persia were common to all the East, and they were lost sight of when those countries were overrun and conquered. The reason why we have so much left of the Persian customs is, that they were written, and so not liable to alteration. While these customs, once common to all the East, have in other countries been to a great extent swept away by the invasion of strangers, they have been preserved in Abyssinia, which has not been thus overrun since the introduction of letters. I shall notice one or two of the points in which the Abyssinians resemble the ancient Egyptians.

The old Egyptians did not eat with strangers; neither, at the present day, do the Abyssinians, though it is now a mere prejudice, because the old occasion for this regulation is lost. They break, however, or purify, any vessel which a stranger may have used to eat or drink with.

The Egyptians made no account of the mother, whatever her state was; if the father was free so was the child. This is strictly so in Abyssinia. The king's child by a negro slave, bought with money or taken in war, is as capable of succeeding

to the throne as any of the children born to him by the noblest women in the country.

The men in ancient Egypt neither bought nor sold ; and at this day it is infamy in Abyssinia for a man to go to market. He cannot carry water or bake bread, but he must wash the clothes belonging to both sexes ; and in this function the women cannot help him.

It was a sort of impiety in Egypt to eat veal ; and the reason is plain—the Egyptians worshipped the cow.\* In Abyssinia, to this day, no man eats veal, though every one readily eats beef ; the Egyptian reason no longer subsists, as in the former case, but the prejudice remains though they have forgotten the reason. The Abyssinians eat no wild or water fowl, not even the goose, which was a great delicacy in Egypt. The reason of this is, that, on their conversion to Judaism, they were forced to relinquish their ancient customs, as far as they were contrary to the Mosaical law ; and the animals in their country not corresponding in form, kind, or name, with those mentioned in the Septuagint, or in the original Hebrew, it has followed that there has been much uncertainty and confusion regarding clean and unclean animals, and the Abyssinians have been unwilling to run the risk of violating the law in any one instance.

I must here notice an unnatural custom prevalent in Abyssinia. A violent outcry was raised in England at the mention of a circumstance which I witnessed on my journey from Masuah to Gondar—I mean the cutting of steaks from a live cow.†

\* It seems to have been their hatred of the shepherds, who ate and sacrificed animals which the Egyptians worshipped, that gave rise to this regulation.—See Genesis xliii. 32 ; xli. 33, 34 ; Exodus viii. 25, 26.

† See this circumstance detailed in Chapter X.

Many persons did not hesitate to pronounce this to be *impossible*. The fact of the Abyssinians being in the habit of eating raw flesh had been recorded by the Jesuits about a hundred years ago ; but they were ignorant of this, and, as it was different from their own notions, they refused to believe it. It must be from prejudice that we condemn the eating of raw flesh ; no precept, divine or human, that I know, forbids it. The eating of flesh *with the blood* was indeed forbidden, but this does not imply that it was unlawful to eat the flesh *raw*. The custom is to be found in many barbarous nations. The practice of eating live animals is not a thing now heard of for the first time. I might give instances of it from ancient history to show that it is neither new nor impossible ; but I shall only further observe, that those of my readers who wish to indulge a spirit of criticism upon the customs, men, and manners described in this history, should first furnish themselves with a more decent stock of reading than, in this instance, they seem to have possessed.

I have witnessed in Abyssinia, bloody banquets, in which the live animal was fed upon ; and, as the plan of this work is to describe the manners of the nations through which I have passed, I cannot avoid giving some account of these banquets, so far as decency will permit me. A cow or bull (more than one if the company is very large) is brought close to the door of the room in which the guests are assembled, and is laid upon the ground with its feet strongly tied. After inflicting a slight wound in the throat, from which a few drops of blood fall to the ground,\*

\* They do this to satisfy the requirements of the Mosaic law, as they interpret it—"Only be sure that thou eat not the blood ; for the blood is the life ; and thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh. Thou shalt not eat it ; thou shalt pour it upon the earth as water."—(Deut. xii. 23, 24.)

they proceed to strip off the skin, and cut away the flesh in solid pieces, without bones. The still quivering flesh is carried at once to table, where it is eaten with unleavened bread, made of a grain called teff. The particulars of these banquets are too disgusting to permit of a more detailed description.

Polygamy is common, and the marriage tie is of the loosest kind. Upon separation, they divide the children, the eldest son falling to the mother by right, and the eldest daughter to the father. If there is only one daughter, and all the rest sons, she is assigned to the father. Similarly, if there is only one son, and all the rest daughters, he is the right of the mother.

The king, when he marries, sends an azazé to the house where the lady lives. This officer announces to her that it is the king's pleasure that she should remove instantly to the palace, when she immediately dresses herself in the best manner, and obeys. Thenceforward he assigns to her an apartment in the palace, and gives her a house elsewhere, in any part she chooses. When he makes her Iteghé, which seems to be the nearest resemblance to marriage, he orders one of the judges to pronounce in his presence that he, the king, has chosen his handmaid, naming her, for his queen ; upon which the crown is put upon her head, but she is not anointed.

The military force of this kingdom has been greatly exaggerated. I do not imagine that any king of Abyssinia ever commanded 40,000 effective men at any time, or upon any cause whatever, exclusive of his household troops.\* The standards are

\* These consist of about 8000 infantry, 2000 of whom are armed with firelocks. The king has also four regiments composed of foreigners, seldom numbering 1600 men, who are his guard in the field. These troops have great privileges, and are sometimes, when the king is out of leading-strings, the *instruments of great oppression*.

large staves, surmounted at the top with a hollow ball, immediately under which is a narrow stripe of silk, made forked or swallow-tailed, like a vane, and seldom much broader. The standards of the infantry have their flags painted two colours cross-ways—yellow, white, red, or green. Those of the cavalry have a lion, red, or green, or white. The black horse have a yellow lion, and over it a white star upon a red ground, referring to two passages in holy writ—"Judah is a lion's whelp," etc. ; and, "There shall come a star out of Judah."

Three proclamations are made before the king marches on any military expedition. The first is—Buy your mules, get ready your provision, and pay your servants ; for, after such a day, "they that seek me here shall not find me." The second, which is about a week after the first, or according as the exigency is pressing, is, "Cut down the kantuffa in the four quarters of the world, for I do not know where I am going." This kantuffa is a thorn which very much molests the king and nobility in their march, by taking hold of their long hair, and the cotton cloth they are wrapped in. The third and last proclamation is, "I am encamped on the Angrab, or Kahha ; he that does not join me there, I will chastise him for seven years."

There is no country in the world where there are so many churches as in Abyssinia. Though the country is very mountainous, and consequently the view much obstructed, it is seldom you see fewer than five or six churches ; while the view from a commanding point will probably include five times that number. Every great man that dies thinks he has atoned for all his wickedness, if he leaves a fund to build a church, or has built one in his lifetime. The king builds many. Wherever a victory is gained, there a church is erected in the very field which is not-

some with the exhalations from the bodies of the slain. Formerly this was only done when the victory was over Pagans or Infidels ; now the same trophy is raised when the victory has been gained over Christians.

The situation of a church is always chosen near running water, for the convenience of their purifications and ablutions, in which they observe strictly the Levitical law. They are always placed on the top of some beautiful round hill, which is surrounded with a plantation of the oxycedrus, or Virginia cedar, interspersed with a lofty and beautiful tree called Cusso.

The churches are all round, with thatched, conical roofs. They are surrounded by a colonnade, formed by trunks of the cedar-tree supporting the projecting roof, which forms an agreeable sheltered walk in hot weather, or in rain. The inside of the church is in several divisions. The first is a circle in which the congregation sit and pray. Within this is a square ; and within the latter, again, is a small division, surrounded by a curtain, and answering to the "holy of holies" in the Jewish temple.

On entering the church, you put off your shoes at the outer precinct ; but you must leave a servant with them if they are good for any thing, else they will be stolen by the priests before you come out again. Before going in, you kiss the threshold and door-posts. The churches are full of miserable daubs of pictures, on parchment, nailed to the walls in a slovenly way. The subjects of these pictures are commonly such as the following :— St. George with his dragon ; St. Demetrius fighting a lion ; St. Pontius Pilate, and his wife ; St. Balaam, and his ass ; St. Samson, and his jaw-bone. The most curious picture of this kind which I have seen in Abyssinia was a miniature on the front of the head-piece of a priest at Adowa, representing Pharaoh on a

white horse plunging in the Red Sea, with many guns and pistols swimming upon the surface of it, around him !

Nothing embossed, or in relief, ever appears in any of their churches, for this would be reckoned idolatry ; but they have used pictures in their churches from a very early period.

The Abuna is looked upon as the patriarch of the Abyssinian Church ; for the Abyssinians have little knowledge of the Coptic patriarch of Alexandria. The Abuna Tecla Haimanout made various regulations with a view to the upholding of the dignity of this office, and the advancement of learning among the priests ; but of late the Abuna is not held in so much esteem as formerly. The chief employment of this dignitary is in ordinations. The ceremony is simple enough. A number of men and children present themselves at a distance, and there stand in an attitude of humility, not daring to approach him. He then asks who these are ; and they tell him they want to be deacons. On this, with a small iron cross in his hand, after making two or three signs, he blows with his mouth twice or thrice upon them, saying, "Let them be deacons." I once saw the whole army of Begemder made deacons, just after a battle in which they had slain about 10,000 men. The Abuna stood at the church of St. Raphael in Aylo Meidan, about a quarter of a mile from them. A thousand women, who were mingled with the soldiers, got the benefit of the same blast and brandishing of the cross, and were made as good deacons as the rest. A somewhat similar form is used in the ordination of monks, who, however, are required to be able to read a chapter of St. Mark.

The Itchegué is the chief of the monks in general, and of those of Debra Libanos in particular. He is ordained by two chief priests holding a white cloth, or veil, over him, while another



says a prayer ; and they then all three lay their hands on his head, and join in psalms together. In troublous times the Itche-gué is a man of much greater consequence than the Abuna.

The monks do not live in convents but in separate houses round their church, each cultivating a piece of land. The priests have their maintenance assigned them in kind, and do not labour.

The Abyssinians, on their conversion to Christianity, received the doctrines of the Greek Church, their first bishop, Frumentius, being ordained about 333 by St. Athanasius, then sitting in the chair of St. Mark. Heresies in course of time crept into the Abyssinian Church. The Jesuits accuse them not only of holding the Eutychian heresy regarding the nature of Christ, but also of denying the "one baptism for the remission of sins." They assert that, once every year, it is the practice to baptize all the adults. I myself once witnessed the ceremony to which the Jesuits refer. It took place on the banks of a small river between the town of Adowa and the church. The ceremony consisted in a sprinkling of water first of all upon the persons of quality present, in the order of their rank. After being sprinkled, they each tasted the water that was contained in a silver chalice, and received a benediction from the priest ; after which they kissed the three crosses which had been dipped in the river, to consecrate the pool whence the water was brought. Immediately after the pool had been consecrated, and the cup filled from the clean part of it, two or three hundred boys, calling themselves deacons, plunged in, with only a white cloth round their middle. A crowd of people went down to the edge of the pool, and received a sprinkling from these young deacons. After the better class of people had received the sprinkling, the whole thing was turned into a riot ; and the governor, monks, and crosses, having

departed, the brook was left in the possession of the boys and blackguards of the town. I should remark that, shortly after the governor had been sprinkled, two horses and two mules, belonging to Ras Michael and Ozoro Esther, came and were washed in the pool. Afterwards the soldiers went in and bathed their horses and guns; those who had wounds bathed them also. Heaps of platters and pots that had been used by Mahometans or Jews were brought thither likewise to be purified, and thus the whole ended.

I have no hesitation in asserting that this whole matter is grossly misrepresented by the Jesuits, and that no baptism, or anything like baptism, is meant by the ceremony. A man is no more baptized by keeping the anniversary of our Saviour's baptism (the ceremony took place on Epiphany), than he is crucified by keeping his crucifixion.

The Abyssinians receive the holy sacrament in both kinds. They use unleavened bread, and the grape bruised with the husk as it grows, so that it is little more fluid than marmalade. Large pieces of bread are given to the communicants in proportion to their quality. After receiving the sacrament of the eucharist in both kinds, a pitcher of water is brought, of which the communicant drinks a large draught. He then retires from the steps of the inner division on which the administering priest stands, and, turning his face to the wall of the church, privately says some prayer, with seeming decency and attention.

The Abyssinians, like the ancient Egyptians, their first colony, in computing their time, have continued the use of the solar year. Diodorus Siculus says, "They do not reckon their time by the moon, but according to the sun. Thirty days constitute their month, to which they add five days and the fourth part of a day."

and this completes their year." They have another way of describing time, peculiar to themselves. They read the whole of the four evangelists every year in their churches, beginning with Matthew, and proceeding to Mark, Luke, and John, in order; and, in speaking of an event, they write or say that it happened in the days of Matthew, if it was in the first quarter of the year, while the Gospel of St. Matthew was being read in the churches. And so of Mark, Luke, and John.

Nothing can be more inaccurate than all Abyssinian calculations. Besides their ignorance of arithmetic, their excessive idleness and aversion to study, and a number of fanciful, whimsical combinations, by which every particular scribe or monk distinguishes himself, there are obvious reasons why there should be a variation between their chronology and ours. The beginnings of our years are different—theirs begin on the 1st of September. The last day of August may be the year 1780 with us, and only 1779 with the Abyssinians. In the annals of their kings they seldom give the lengths of the reigns with precision; and this produces more or less of confusion in the history of the country. A difference of two or three years, however, is a matter of little consequence in the history of barbarous nations. From the record of certain eclipses in the annals of Abyssinia, the dates of which correspond with European observations, I am satisfied that the chronology of my sketch of the history of this country is sufficiently correct for all practical purposes.

## CHAPTER VIII.

*Residence at Masuah—Character of the Naybe—Debate concerning what is to be done to me—Interviews with Achmet and the Naybe —Avaricious and violent conduct of the Naybe—I succeed in holding my own, and in leaving Masuah.*

MASUAH, which means the “Harbour of the Shepherds,” is a small island close upon the Abyssinian shore, having excellent anchorage for ships of any size. It is scarcely three quarters of a mile in length, and about half that in breadth. A third of the island is occupied by houses, a third by cisterns for collecting the rain-water, and the remaining space is reserved for burying the dead. Masuah was originally a place of great commerce, possessing a share of the India trade, as well as exporting gold and ivory, buffalo hides, pearls, and, above all, slaves ; but it fell into obscurity soon after it came under the oppression of the Turks.

The first government of Masuah, under the Turks, was by a basha sent from Constantinople ; but, when the place lost its trade and its value as a garrison, it was thought no longer worth while to keep up so expensive an establishment as that of a bashalik. The civil government of Masuah was then conferred on the chief of a tribe of Mahometans, living at the foot of the mountains of Habab, a little to the north, who had rendered good service to the Turks, when they conquered this place. The title conferred on the new governor was Naybe of Masuah, held

by firman from the Ottoman Porte, to which he paid an annual tribute.

The Naybe, finding his great distance from his protectors, the Turks, in Arabia, whose garrisons were daily decaying in strength, sensible, too, how much he was in the power of the Abyssinians, his enemies and nearest neighbours, began to think he had better secure himself at home by making some advances to those in whose power he was. It was accordingly agreed that one-half of the customs should be paid by him to the king of Abyssinia, who was to suffer him to enjoy his government unmolested ; for Masuah, as I have before said, is absolutely destitute of water ; neither can it be supplied with any sort of provision, but from the mountainous country of Abyssinia. The same may be said of Arkeeko, a large town on the mainland opposite the island, which has indeed water, but labours under the same scarcity of provisions, the country behind being a perfect desert.

The friendship of Abyssinia being thus secured, and the power of the Turks declining daily in Arabia, the Naybe began by degrees to withdraw himself from paying tribute at all to the basha of Jidda, to whose government his had been annexed by the Porte. He received the firman as a mere form, and returned trifling presents, but no tribute. In troublous times, or when a weak government happened to be in Tigré, he withdrew himself equally from paying any consideration to the pasha, in name of tribute, or to the king of Abyssinia, as share of the customs. This was precisely his situation when I arrived in Abyssinia. A great revolution, as we have already seen,\* had happened in that kingdom, of which Michael had been the principal author. When he was called to Gondar and made minister there, Tigré

\* See page 113.

remained drained of troops, and without a governor. The new king of Abyssinia was more than seventy years of age, and his minister was nearly eighty, and lame ; so the Naybe conceived he could safely stop payments to the Abyssinian king, as well as to the basha of Jidda. The Naybe had, however, received threatening messages both from Michael and the basha, intimating the consequences of his continuing to withhold the usual payments. This created something of a panic among the stranger merchants at Masuah, many of whom fled to Arabia ; nevertheless the Naybe showed no public mark of fear, and sent not one penny either to the king of Abyssinia, or to the basha of Jidda.

Abdelcader, the governor of Dahalac, a servant of the Naybe of Masuah, had left Jidda at the same time as myself, and had witnessed the honour paid me by the English fleet. This man had sailed straight over to Masuah, while I was exploring the gulf as far as the Straits, and had spread a report that a prince was coming, a very near relation to the king of England, who was no trader, but came only to visit countries and peoples ! It was deliberated between the Naybe and his counsellors what was to be done with this prince. Some were for the most expeditious, and what has long been the most customary, method of treating strangers at Masuah, to put me to death, and divide my property. Others were for waiting to see what letters I had from Arabia to Abyssinia, lest this might prove an addition to the storm just ready to break upon them on the part of Metical Aga and Michael Suhul. But Achmet, the Naybe's nephew, said that, whether I had letters of protection or not, my very rank should protect me ; that a sufficient quantity of strangers' blood had been already shed at Masuah, and he believed a curse and poverty had followed it ; that half the guns, which they were told were fired at Jidda

in compliment to me, would be sufficient to destroy them all, and lay Arkeeko and Masuah as desolate as Michael had threatened to make them. Achmet declared, therefore, his resolution, that I should be received with marks of consideration, till, from an inspection of my letters, and conversation with myself, it was seen what sort of a man I was. If I was a priest, or one of those Franks, they might do with me as they pleased. Achmet had great influence as the heir-apparent of the old Naybe ; and it was agreed that my fate should be left to him.

It was the 19th of September, 1769, when we arrived at Masuah, very much tired of the sea, and desirous to land. I thought it, however, prudent to remain on board, till I had some communication with the Naybe. Mahomet Gibberti landed that evening, and managed to dispatch letters for me to Adowa, the capital of Tigré. He then repaired to the Naybe and Achmet, and adroitly confirmed all the ideas Achmet himself had first started in council with the Naybe, with regard to my importance, and the dangerous consequences that would ensue, were any injury done to me.

On the 20th, a person came from Mahomet Gibberti to conduct me on shore. The Naybe himself was at Arkeeko, and Achmet, therefore, had come down to receive the duties of the merchandise on board the vessel that brought me. There were two elbow chairs placed in the middle of the market-place. Achmet sat on one of them, while the several officers opened the bales and packages before him ; the other chair was empty. He was dressed all in white, in a long Banian habit of muslin, and close bodied frock reaching to his ankles. As soon as I came in sight of him I doubled my pace. Mahomet Gibberti's servant whispered to me not to kiss his hand, which, indeed, I intended to

have done. Achmet stood up, just as I arrived within arms' length of him ; when we touched each other's hands, carried our fingers to our lips, then laid our hands across our breasts ; I pronounced the salutation of the inferior, "Salam alicum !" to which he answered immediately, "Alicum salam !" He pointed to the chair, which I declined ; but he obliged me to sit down. He then made a sign for coffee, the offering of which is, in these countries, a sign that your life is not in danger. He began with an air that seemed rather serious :—"We have expected you here some time, but thought you had changed your mind, and gone to India."

"Since sailing from Jidda," I answered, "I have been in Arabia Felix, the Gulf of Mocha, and crossed last from Loheia."

"Are you not afraid," said he, "so thinly attended, to venture on these long and dangerous voyages ?"

"The countries in which I have been," replied I, "are either subject to the Emperor of Constantinople, whose firman I have now the honour to present you, or to the regency of Cairo, and port of Janissaries (here are their letters), or to the Sherriffe of Mecca. To you, sir, I present the Sherriffe's letters ; and, besides these, one from Metical Aga, your friend, who, depending on your character, assured me this alone would be sufficient to preserve me from ill-usage, so long as I did no wrong. As for the dangers of the road from banditti and lawless persons, my servants are indeed few, but they are veteran soldiers ; and I value not the superior number of cowardly and disorderly persons."

He then returned me the letters, saying, "You will give these to the Naybe to-morrow ; I will keep Metical's letter, as it is to me, and will read it at home." He put it accordingly in his bosom ; and, our coffee being done, I rose to take my leave, and



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A good house had been provided for me, and I had no sooner entered it than a large dinner was sent us by Achmet, with a profusion of lemons, and good fresh water, now one of the greatest delicacies. Shortly afterwards our baggage arrived, unopened, at which I was very well pleased, being afraid they might break something in my clock, telescopes, or quadrant, by the violent way in which they satisfy their curiosity.

Late at night I received a visit from Achmet, who was then in an undress, consisting of a pair of calico drawers, and a barracan thrown loosely about his naked body. He had a white cotton cap on his head, and carried no arms of any description. I rose up to meet him, and thank him for his civility in sending my baggage. He asked me if it was true that I was a prince, and inquired if I had been banished from my own country, and what made me expose myself to so many dangers ?

I answered, "I am neither son nor brother of a king. I am a private Englishman. If you, Sidi Achmet, saw my prince, the eldest, or any son of the king of England, you would then be able to form a juster idea of them, and that would for ever hinder you from confounding them with common men like me. If they were to choose to appear in this part of the world, this little sea would be too narrow for their ships ; your sun, now so hot, would be darkened by their sails ; and when they fired their terrible wide-mouthed cannon, not an Arab would think himself safe on the distant mountains, while the houses on the shore would totter and fall to the ground, as if shaken to pieces by an earthquake. I am a servant to that king, and an inferior one in rank. Yet so

far your correspondents say well, my ancestors were the kings of the country in which I was born, and to be ranked among the greatest and most glorious that ever bore the title. This is the truth. May I now ask, To what does all this information tend?"

"To your safety," said he, "and to your honour, as long as I command in Masuah; to your certain destruction if you go among the Abyssinians, a people without faith, covetous, barbarous, and in continual war."

"Be it so," said I. "I would now speak one word to you in private." Everybody was ordered out of the room, when I thanked him for taking my part when the Naybe and his counsellors were plotting my death (my knowledge of which circumstance filled him with much surprise), and presented him with a handsome pair of pistols. "Let the pistols remain with you," said Achmet, "and show them to nobody, till I send you a man to whom you may say anything; for there are in this place a number of devils, not men; but *Ullah Kerim!* God is great! The person that brings you dry dates in an Indian handkerchief, and an earthen bottle to drink your water out of, give him the pistols. In the meantime sleep sound, and fear no evil; but never be persuaded to trust yourself to the Cafrs of Habesh at Masuah."

Next morning the Naybe came from Arkeeko. He was attended by three or four servants, miserably mounted, and about forty naked savages on foot, armed with short lances and crooked knives. A drum beat before him all the way from Arkeeko to Masuah. The drums are earthen jars, such as they send butter in to Arabia; the mouths are covered with skin, and a stranger would take them for jars of butter or pickles, carefully covered with oiled parchment. The Naybe was dressed in an

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I presented my firman. The greatest basha in the Turkish empire would have risen upon seeing it, kissed it, and carried it to his forehead. But he did not even receive it into his hand, and pushed it back to me, saying, "Read it all to me, word for word." I told him it was Turkish, and that I had never learned to read a word of that language. "Nor I either," says he, "and I believe I never shall." I then gave him the other letters. He took them all together in both his hands, and laid them unopened beside him, saying, "You should have brought a moullah along with you. Do you think I shall read all these letters? Why, it would take me a month!" and he glared upon me, with his mouth open, so like an idiot, that it was with the utmost difficulty that I kept my gravity, only answering, "Just as you please; you know best."

Shortly afterwards I gave him his present, with which he did not seem displeased, and took my leave, little satisfied with my

reception, but heartily rejoicing at having sent my despatches to Janni, at Adowa, now far out of his power.

On the 15th of October the Naybe came to Masuah, and despatched the vessel that brought me over; and, as if he only waited till this evidence was out of the way, he that very night sent me word that I was to prepare him a handsome present. He gave me a long list of the articles he wanted, directing them to be put up in three parcels, and presented on three separate days. The first parcel was to be given him as Naybe of Arkeeko, the second as the representative of the Grand Seignior, and the third for having passed our baggage, especially the large quadrant, gratis and unopened.

I replied, that having a firman of the Grand Seignior, and letters from Metical Aga, it was mere generosity in me to give him any present at all; that I was not a merchant, and had no merchandise on board, and therefore had no customs to pay. Upon this he sent for me to his house, where I found him in a violent fury. Many useless words passed on both sides. At last he peremptorily told me that unless I had 300 ounces of gold ready to pay him on Monday, he would confine me in a dungeon, without light, air, or meat, until the bones came through my skin.

"Since you have broken your faith," said I, "with the Grand Seignior, the Government of Cairo, the Basha of Jidda, and the Sherriffe of Mecca, you will, no doubt, do as you please with me; but you may expect to see the English man-of-war, the Lion, before Arkeeko, some morning by day-break."

"I should be glad," said the Naybe, "to see the man at Arkeeko or Masuah, that would carry as much writing from you to Jidda as would lie upon my thumb nail. I would strip his shirt off first, then his skin, and hang him before your door to teach you more wisdom."

"But my wisdom," I replied, "has taught me to prevent all this. My letter is already gone to Jidda; and if, in twenty days from this, another letter from me does not follow it, you will see what will arrive. In the meantime, I here announce to you that I have letters from Metical Aga and the Sherriffe of Mecca to Michael Suhul, governor of Tigré, and to the king of Abyssinia. Let me, therefore, continue my journey."

"What, Michael too!" the Naybe said in a low voice to himself, "then go your journey, and think of the ill that is before you!" I left him without any answer or salutation.

On the 29th of October, the Naybe came again from Arkeeko to Masuah, and sent for me. I found him in a large room like a barn, with about sixty people with him, forming his divan or grand council. A comet was then visible at Masuah, and I had been watching it attentively with my telescopes. The first question the Naybe asked me was, what the comet meant, and why it had appeared? Before I could answer, he added, "The first time it was visible it brought the small-pox, which killed above a thousand people in Masuah and Arkeeko. It is known you conversed with it at Loheia; it has now followed you hither to finish the few that remain; and then you are to carry it into Abyssinia. What have you to do with the comet?" Half a dozen of them spoke after the Naybe, declaring that I was going to Michael to teach the Abyssinians to make gunpowder, and that their first attack would be upon Masuah. The Naybe concluded by saying that he would send me in chains to Constantinople, unless I went to Hamazen with his brother Emir Achmet. I said I would not go to Hamazen, or anywhere else, with Emir Achmet, as it was just a plot to rob and murder me. "Dog of a Christian!" exclaimed the Emir, "If the Naybe wished to mur-

der you, could he not do it here this minute?" "No," said the Sardar (officer in command) of the janissaries, "he could not; I would not suffer any such thing. Achmet is the stranger's friend, and recommended me to see no injury done him. Achmet is ill, or he would have been here himself." "Achmet," said I, "is my friend, and fears God; and, were I not hindered by the Naybe from seeing him, his sickness before this would have been removed. I will not go to Hamazen. Whatever happens to me must befall me in my own house. Consider what a figure a few naked men will make when my countrymen ask the reason of this!" I then went out without ceremony.

I had scarcely dined when a servant came with a letter from Achmet, telling me how ill he had been, and how sorry he was that I refused to come and see him, and desiring me to give the bearer the charge of my gate till he should himself come to Masuah. That night there was an attempt made to force the door, but, on our threatening to fire on them, the assailants desisted.

On the 4th of November, I went to Arkeeko, and found Achmet ill of an intermitting fever. I gave him the proper remedies, and stayed with him till the 6th, when he was free from fever. That morning, while at breakfast, I was rejoiced to hear that three servants had arrived from Tigré; one from Janni, a young man and slave, who spoke and wrote Greek perfectly; the two others from Ras Michael, or rather from the King, both wearing the red short cloak, lined and turned up with mazarine blue, which is the badge of the royal retinue. Ras Michael's letters to the Naybe were very short. He said the King's health was bad, and wondered at hearing that the physician sent to him by Metical Aga was not sent forward without delay to Gondar, as he had heard of his being arrived at Masuah some time before.



He ordered the Naybe, moreover, to furnish me with necessaries, and send me without loss of time. In the evening we returned to Masuah, much to the joy of my servants, who were afraid of some stratagem of the Naybe.

We got everything in order without interruption, and completed our observations upon this inhospitable island, infamous for the quantity of Christian blood treacherously shed there. On the 10th of November, we left Masuah with the soldiers and boats belonging to Achmet. Arriving at Arkeeko, I found that Achmet, though much better, was threatened with dysentery. I succeeded in freeing him from his complaint, for which he was very grateful, as he was wonderfully afraid to die.

On the 14th, I waited upon the Naybe, according to appointment, having first struck my tent and got all my baggage in readiness. He received me with more civility than usual, and said with a grave air that he was willing to further my journey into Habesh to the utmost of his power, provided I showed him that consideration which was due to him from all passengers. Less than 1000 patakas offered by me would be putting a great affront on him ; however, he would consent to receive 300, on my swearing not to divulge the fact of his accepting such an insignificant sum. I answered in the same grave tone, that I thought him very wrong to take 300 patakas with shame, when it would be more honourable as well as more profitable to receive 1000 ; therefore, he had nothing to do but to put that into his account-book with the governor of Tigré, and settle his honour and his interest together. As for myself, I was sent for by Metical Aga, on account of the King, and, if he opposed my going forward, I would return ; but then I should expect ten thousand patakas from Metical Aga, for my trouble and loss of time, which

he and the Ras would no doubt settle with him. The Naybe said nothing in reply, only muttering, between his closed teeth, "Sheitan afrit!" (that devil or tormenting spirit!) "Look you," said one of the king's servants, "I was ordered to bring this man to my master—I heard no talk of patakas. The army is ready to march against Waragna Fasil ; I must not lose my time here. Within this hour I am for Habesh." The Naybe bade him stay till next day to receive his letters, and he would then expedite us for Habesh.

On the 15th, early in the morning, I again struck my tent, and had my baggage prepared, to show that we were determined to stay no longer. The Naybe was almost alone when I went to him. He began with considerable fluency to enumerate the difficulties of the journey, but said he would recommend the savage people through whose countries I had to pass to do me all manner of good offices. Upon this a servant entered the room, covered with dust, and apparently fatigued, as if from a hasty journey. The Naybe, with a considerable deal of uneasiness and confusion read the letters brought to him, and told me that they brought intelligence that the three tribes, possessing that part of Samhar, through which our road lay to Tigré, had revolted, driven away his servants, and declared themselves independent. Lifting up his eyes, he thanked God we were not already on our journey, for our death would have been imputed to him ! Angry as I was at so barefaced a farce, I could not help bursting into a violent fit of laughter, when he put on his severest countenance, asking what I meant. "Can you wonder," said I, "that I do not give in to so gross an imposition ? This morning I spoke with two Shiho, just arrived from Samhar, with letters to Achmet, which said all was in peace." "If you are weary of living," said the Naybe,

after a pause, "you may go." "No number of naked Shiho," said I, "unless instructed by you, can ever venture to attack us. The Shiho have no fire-arms ; but if you have sent on purpose some of your soldiers that have fire-arms, these will discover by what authority they come. For our part, we cannot fly, knowing neither the country nor the language ; and we shall not attempt it. We are well armed ; and your servants at Masuah have seen that we can use our weapons. We may lose our lives—that is in the hand of the Almighty ; but we shall not fail to leave enough on the spot, to give sufficient indication to the king and Ras Michael who were our assassins ; Janni of Adowa will explain the rest." In his turn the Naybe burst into a fit of loud laughter, which surprised me as much as mine had surprised him. Every feature of his treacherous countenance was altered and softened into complacency. "What I mentioned about the Shiho," said he, "was but to try you. All is peace ; the roads are safe enough. I will give you a person to conduct you. Only go and prepare such remedies as may be necessary for the Emir Mahomet, whom I wished to keep you here to cure, and leave them with Achmet, while I finish my letters."

This I willingly consented to do, and at my return I found everything ready. After a brief interview with Achmet, I gladly took my departure.

## CHAPTER IX.

*From Arkeeko to Adowa—Achmet's Farewell—We meet with Shiho—  
A Storm in the Mountains—Tubbo—Difficult Ascent of Taranta  
—Arrival at Dixan—A Story of Kidnapping—I purchase my  
horse, Mirza—Detention at Kella—Arrival at Adowa.*

WE left Arkeeko, which is a small town of four hundred houses, on the 15th of November. After an hour's journey along the plain, I pitched my tent near a pit of rain-water. From this point I had a good view of the mountains of Abyssinia, which rise in three distinct ridges. The first is of no considerable height, but full of gullies and broken ground, thinly covered with shrubs; the second higher and steeper, and still more rugged and bare; the third is a row of sharp, uneven-edged mountains, which would be counted high in any country in Europe. Far above them all towers that stupendous mass, the mountain of Taranta, the point of which is buried in the clouds, and only seen in the clearest weather; at other times abandoned to perpetual mist and darkness. the seat of lightning, thunder, and storm. Taranta is the highest pinnacle of a long range of mountains, on the east side of which, or towards the Red Sea, the rainy season is from October to April; and on the western, or Abyssinian side, cloudy, rainy, and cold weather prevails from May to October.

While we halted here, I had a visit from Achmet, who changed

was presently wet to the skin by deluges of orange-flower water, showered upon me from the right and left, by two of his attendants, from silver bottles.

A good house had been provided for me, and I had no sooner entered it than a large dinner was sent us by Achmet, with a profusion of lemons, and good fresh water, now one of the greatest delicacies. Shortly afterwards our baggage arrived, unopened, at which I was very well pleased, being afraid they might break something in my clock, telescopes, or quadrant, by the violent way in which they satisfy their curiosity.

Late at night I received a visit from Achmet, who was then in an undress, consisting of a pair of calico drawers, and a barracan thrown loosely about his naked body. He had a white cotton cap on his head, and carried no arms of any description. I rose up to meet him, and thank him for his civility in sending my baggage. He asked me if it was true that I was a prince, and inquired if I had been banished from my own country, and what made me expose myself to so many dangers ?

I answered, " I am neither son nor brother of a king. I am a private Englishman. If you, Sidi Achmet, saw my prince, the eldest, or any son of the king of England, you would then be able to form a juster idea of them, and that would for ever hinder you from confounding them with common men like me. If they were to choose to appear in this part of the world, this little sea would be too narrow for their ships ; your sun, now so hot, would be darkened by their sails ; and when they fired their terrible wide-mouthed cannon, not an Arab would think himself safe on the distant mountains, while the houses on the shore would totter and fall to the ground, as if shaken to pieces by an earthquake. I am a servant to that king, and an inferior one in rank. Yet so

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Next morning the Naybe came from Arkeeko. He was attended by three or four servants, miserably mounted, and about forty naked savages on foot, armed with short lances and crooked knives. A drum beat before him all the way from Arkeeko to Masuah. The drums are earthen jars, such as they send butter in to Arabia ; the mouths are covered with skin, and a stranger would take them for jars of butter or pickles, carefully covered with oiled parchment. The Naybe was dressed in an

old shabby Turkish habit, much too short for him, and wore a Turkish cowke, or high cap, which scarcely admitted any part of his head. In this ridiculous garb, preceded by two standards of white silk, stripped with red, he went to the mosque, where he received the caftan, or investiture of the island of Masuah. In the afternoon I went to pay my respects to him, and found him sitting on a large wooden elbow-chair, at the head of two files of naked savages, who made an avenue from his chair to the door. He was a tall, thin, black man, with a large mouth and nose; for a beard he had a very scanty tuft of grey hair upon the point of his chin; his eyes were large, dull, and heavy; and his countenance wore a malicious, contemptuous smile. His character perfectly corresponded with his appearance, for he was a man of mean abilities, cruel to excess, avaricious, and a great drunkard.

I presented my firman. The greatest basha in the Turkish empire would have risen upon seeing it, kissed it, and carried it to his forehead. But he did not even receive it into his hand, and pushed it back to me, saying, "Read it all to me, word for word." I told him it was Turkish, and that I had never learned to read a word of that language. "Nor I either," says he, "and I believe I never shall." I then gave him the other letters. He took them all together in both his hands, and laid them unopened beside him, saying, "You should have brought a moullah along with you. Do you think I shall read all these letters? Why, it would take me a month!" and he glared upon me, with his mouth open, so like an idiot, that it was with the utmost difficulty that I kept my gravity, only answering, "Just as you please; you know best."

Shortly afterwards I gave him his present, with which he did not seem displeased, and took my leave, little satisfied with my

reception, but heartily rejoicing at having sent my despatches to Janni, at Adowa, now far out of his power.

On the 15th of October the Naybe came to Masuah, and despatched the vessel that brought me over; and, as if he only waited till this evidence was out of the way, he that very night sent me word that I was to prepare him a handsome present. He gave me a long list of the articles he wanted, directing them to be put up in three parcels, and presented on three separate days. The first parcel was to be given him as Naybe of Arkeeko, the second as the representative of the Grand Seignior, and the third for having passed our baggage, especially the large quadrant, gratis and unopened.

I replied, that having a firman of the Grand Seignior, and letters from Metical Aga, it was mere generosity in me to give him any present at all; that I was not a merchant, and had no merchandise on board, and therefore had no customs to pay. Upon this he sent for me to his house, where I found him in a violent fury. Many useless words passed on both sides. At last he peremptorily told me that unless I had 300 ounces of gold ready to pay him on Monday, he would confine me in a dungeon, without light, air, or meat, until the bones came through my skin.

"Since you have broken your faith," said I, "with the Grand Seignior, the Government of Cairo, the Basha of Jidda, and the Sherriffe of Mecca, you will, no doubt, do as you please with me; but you may expect to see the English man-of-war, the Lion, before Arkeeko, some morning by day-break."

"I should be glad," said the Naybe, "to see the man at Arkeeko or Masuah, that would carry as much writing from you to Jidda as would lie upon my thumb nail. I would strip his shirt off first, then his skin, and hang him before your door to teach you more wisdom."



"But my wisdom," I replied, "has taught me to prevent all this. My letter is already gone to Jidda; and if, in twenty days from this, another letter from me does not follow it, you will see what will arrive. In the meantime, I here announce to you that I have letters from Metical Aga and the Sheriffe of Mecca to Michael Suhul, governor of Tigré, and to the king of Abyssinia. Let me, therefore, continue my journey."

"What, Michael too!" the Naybe said in a low voice to himself, "then go your journey, and think of the ill that is before you!" I left him without any answer or salutation.

On the 29th of October, the Naybe came again from Arkeeko to Masuah, and sent for me. I found him in a large room like a barn, with about sixty people with him, forming his divan or grand council. A comet was then visible at Masuah, and I had been watching it attentively with my telescopes. The first question the Naybe asked me was, what the comet meant, and why it had appeared? Before I could answer, he added, "The first time it was visible it brought the small-pox, which killed above a thousand people in Masuah and Arkeeko. It is known you conversed with it at Loheia; it has now followed you hither to finish the few that remain; and then you are to carry it into Abyssinia. What have you to do with the comet?" Half a dozen of them spoke after the Naybe, declaring that I was going to Michael to teach the Abyssinians to make gunpowder, and that their first attack would be upon Masuah. The Naybe concluded by saying that he would send me in chains to Constantinople, unless I went to Hamazen with his brother Emir Achmet. I said I would not go to Hamazen, or anywhere else, with Emir Achmet, as it was just a plot to rob and murder me. "Dog of a Christian!" exclaimed the Emir, "If the Naybe wished to mur-

der you, could he not do it here this minute?" "No," said the Sardar (officer in command) of the janissaries, "he could not; I would not suffer any such thing. Achmet is the stranger's friend, and recommended me to see no injury done him. Achmet is ill, or he would have been here himself." "Achmet," said I, "is my friend, and fears God; and, were I not hindered by the Naybe from seeing him, his sickness before this would have been removed. I will not go to Hamazen. Whatever happens to me must befall me in my own house. Consider what a figure a few naked men will make when my countrymen ask the reason of this!" I then went out without ceremony.

I had scarcely dined when a servant came with a letter from Achmet, telling me how ill he had been, and how sorry he was that I refused to come and see him, and desiring me to give the bearer the charge of my gate till he should himself come to Masuah. That night there was an attempt made to force the door, but, on our threatening to fire on them, the assailants desisted.

On the 4th of November, I went to Arkeeko, and found Achmet ill of an intermitting fever. I gave him the proper remedies, and stayed with him till the 6th, when he was free from fever. That morning, while at breakfast, I was rejoiced to hear that three servants had arrived from Tigré; one from Janni, a young man and slave, who spoke and wrote Greek perfectly; the two others from Ras Michael, or rather from the King, both wearing the red short cloak, lined and turned up with mazarine blue, which is the badge of the royal retinue. Ras Michael's letters to the Naybe were very short. He said the King's health was bad, and wondered at hearing that the physician sent to him by Metical Aga was not sent forward without delay to Gondar, as he had heard of his being arrived at Masuah some time before.

He ordered the Naybe, moreover, to furnish me with necessaries, and send me without loss of time. In the evening we returned to Masuah, much to the joy of my servants, who were afraid of some stratagem of the Naybe.

We got everything in order without interruption, and completed our observations upon this inhospitable island, infamous for the quantity of Christian blood treacherously shed there. On the 10th of November, we left Masuah with the soldiers and boats belonging to Achmet. Arriving at Arkeeko, I found that Achmet, though much better, was threatened with dysentery. I succeeded in freeing him from his complaint, for which he was very grateful, as he was wonderfully afraid to die.

On the 14th, I waited upon the Naybe, according to appointment, having first struck my tent and got all my baggage in readiness. He received me with more civility than usual, and said with a grave air that he was willing to further my journey into Habesh to the utmost of his power, provided I showed him that consideration which was due to him from all passengers. Less than 1000 patakas offered by me would be putting a great affront on him ; however, he would consent to receive 300, on my swearing not to divulge the fact of his accepting such an insignificant sum. I answered in the same grave tone, that I thought him very wrong to take 300 patakas with shame, when it would be more honourable as well as more profitable to receive 1000 ; therefore, he had nothing to do but to put that into his account-book with the governor of Tigré, and settle his honour and his interest together. As for myself, I was sent for by Metical Aga, on account of the King, and, if he opposed my going forward, I would return ; but then I should expect ten thousand patakas from Metical Aga, for my trouble and loss of time, which

he and the Ras would no doubt settle with him. The Naybe said nothing in reply, only muttering, between his closed teeth, "Sheitan afrit!" (that devil or tormenting spirit!) "Look you," said one of the king's servants, "I was ordered to bring this man to my master—I heard no talk of patakas. The army is ready to march against Waragna Fasil; I must not lose my time here. Within this hour I am for Habesh." The Naybe bade him stay till next day to receive his letters, and he would then expedite us for Habesh.

On the 15th, early in the morning, I again struck my tent, and had my baggage prepared, to show that we were determined to stay no longer. The Naybe was almost alone when I went to him. He began with considerable fluency to enumerate the difficulties of the journey, but said he would recommend the savage people through whose countries I had to pass to do me all manner of good offices. Upon this a servant entered the room, covered with dust, and apparently fatigued, as if from a hasty journey. The Naybe, with a considerable deal of uneasiness and confusion read the letters brought to him, and told me that they brought intelligence that the three tribes, possessing that part of Samhar, through which our road lay to Tigré, had revolted, driven away his servants, and declared themselves independent. Lifting up his eyes, he thanked God we were not already on our journey, for our death would have been imputed to him! Angry as I was at so barefaced a farce, I could not help bursting into a violent fit of laughter, when he put on his severest countenance, asking what I meant. "Can you wonder," said I, "that I do not give in to so gross an imposition? This morning I spoke with two Shiho, just arrived from Samhar, with letters to Achmet, which said all was in peace." "If you are weary of living," said the Naybe,

after a pause, "you may go." "No number of naked Shiho," said I, "unless instructed by you, can ever venture to attack us. The Shiho have no fire-arms ; but if you have sent on purpose some of your soldiers that have fire-arms, these will discover by what authority they come. For our part, we cannot fly, knowing neither the country nor the language ; and we shall not attempt it. We are well armed ; and your servants at Masuah have seen that we can use our weapons. We may lose our lives—that is in the hand of the Almighty ; but we shall not fail to leave enough on the spot, to give sufficient indication to the king and Ras Michael who were our assassins ; Janni of Adowa will explain the rest." In his turn the Naybe burst into a fit of loud laughter, which surprised me as much as mine had surprised him. Every feature of his treacherous countenance was altered and softened into complacency. "What I mentioned about the Shiho," said he, "was but to try you. All is peace ; the roads are safe enough. I will give you a person to conduct you. Only go and prepare such remedies as may be necessary for the Emir Mahomet, whom I wished to keep you here to cure, and leave them with Achmet, while I finish my letters."

This I willingly consented to do, and at my return I found everything ready. After a brief interview with Achmet, I gladly took my departure.

## CHAPTER IX.

*From Arkeeko to Adowa—Achmet's Farewell—We meet with Shiho—  
A Storm in the Mountains—Tubbo—Difficult Ascent of Taranta  
—Arrival at Dixan—A Story of Kidnapping—I purchase my  
horse, Mirza—Detention at Kella—Arrival at Adowa.*

WE left Arkeeko, which is a small town of four hundred houses, on the 15th of November. After an hour's journey along the plain, I pitched my tent near a pit 'of rain-water. From this point I had a good view of the mountains of Abyssinia, which rise in three distinct ridges. The first is of no considerable height, but full of gullies and broken ground, thinly covered with shrubs; the second higher and steeper, and still more rugged and bare; the third is a row of sharp, uneven-edged mountains, which would be counted high in any country in Europe. Far above them all towers that stupendous mass, the mountain of Taranta, the point of which is buried in the clouds, and only seen in the clearest weather; at other times abandoned to perpetual mist and darkness. the seat of lightning, thunder, and storm. Taranta is the highest pinnacle of a long range of mountains, on the east side of which, or towards the Red Sea, the rainy season is from October to April; and on the western, or Abyssinian side, cloudy, rainy, and cold weather prevails from May to October.

While we halted here, I had a visit from Achmet, who changed

four of the men whom the Naybe had sent us to carry our baggage, for four of his own. He then came into the tent, called for coffee, and, while drinking it, said, "You are sufficiently persuaded that I am your friend ; if you are not, it is too late now to convince you. You are not to go to Dobarwa, though it is the best road, the safest being preferable to the easiest. Saloomé knows the road by Dixan as well as the other. You will be apt to curse me when you are toiling and sweating, ascending Taranta ; but I would have you then to consider, if the fatigue of body is not overpaid by the absolute safety in which you find yourselves. Dobarwa belongs to the Naybe, and I cannot answer for the orders he may have given to his own servants ; but Dixan is mine, although the people are much worse than those of Dobarwa. I have written to my officers there ; they will behave the better to you for this ; and, as you are strong and robust, the best I can do for you is to send you by a rugged road, and a safe one."

Achmet again gave his orders to Saloomé, my guide ; and we, all rising, said the *fedtah*, or prayer of peace ; which being over, his servant gave him a narrow web of muslin, which with his own hands he wrapped round my head, in the manner the better sort of Mahometans wear it at Dixan. We then parted, Achmet saying, "He that is your enemy is mine also ; you shall hear of me by Mahomet Gibberti."

Thus finished a series of trouble and vexation, not to say danger, superior to anything I had ever before experienced, and of which the bare recital will give but an imperfect idea. These wretches possess talents for tormenting and alarming, far beyond the power of belief ; and, by laying a true sketch of them before a traveller, an author does him the most real service. In this

country, the more truly we draw the portrait of man, the more we seem to fall into caricature.

For two days we travelled along a firm gravelly plain, thickly covered with acacia trees, now in blossom, bearing a round yellow flower. Our course had hitherto been south ; but we now turned westward, through an opening in the mountains. The bed of the torrent was our only road ; and, as it was all sand, we could not wish for a better. The moisture it had strongly imbibed protected it from the immediate effects of the sun, and produced, all along its course, a great degree of vegetation. Its banks were full of rack trees, capers, and tamarinds. We continued this road, among mountains of no great height, but bare, stony, and full of terrible precipices. We met this day with great numbers of Shiho, with their wives and families, descending from the mountains of Habesh to pasture their flocks on the plains near the sea, where grass is abundant in October and November. In the previous months they feed their flocks on the other side of the mountain. This tribe was once very numerous ; but, like all those which communicate with Masuah, it has been much diminished by the small-pox. The Shiho are the blackest of the tribes bordering upon the Red Sea. The women wear a coarse cotton gown, reaching down to their ankles, girt about the middle with a leather belt, and having very wide sleeves ; the men have short cotton breeches, reaching to the middle of the thigh, and a goat's skin across their shoulders. They have neither tents nor cottages ; but either live in caves in the mountains, under trees, or in small conical huts, built with a thick grass, like reeds. Each of the men, in the parties we met, had a lance in his hand and a knife in his girdle.

At night we pitched our tent at a place called *Hamhamma*,



on the side of a small green hill, some hundred yards from the bed of the torrent. The weather had been perfectly good since we left Masuah ; this afternoon, however, it threatened rain ; the high mountains were quite hid, and great part of the lower ones covered with thick clouds ; the lightning was very frequent, broad, and deeply tinged with blue ; and long peals of thunder were heard, but at a distance. This was the first sample we had of Abyssinian bad weather. The river scarcely ran at our passing it, when all of a sudden we heard a noise on the mountains above, louder than the loudest thunder. Our guides, upon this, flew to the baggage, and removed it to the top of the green hill, which was no sooner done, than we saw the river coming down in a stream about the height of a man, and the breadth of the whole bed it used to occupy. The water was thickly tinged with red earth, and swelled a little above its banks, but did not reach our station on the hill.

Next morning, at half-past five, we left our station on the side of the green hill at Hamhammou. For some time our road lay through a plain so full of acacia trees that our hands and faces were all torn and bloody with the strokes of their thorny branches. We then resumed our former path in the bed of the torrent, now nearly dry, though the stones were very slippery after the rain of the preceding night. We were now in the district of the Hazorta. The people of this tribe are of a lighter hue, and smaller stature than the Shiho. They live in caves, or in cabannes, like cages, covered with ox hides, and just large enough to hold two persons. We halted in a delightful spot, not far from several of the huts of the Hazorta, on the banks of a rapid stream, the first clear water I had seen since leaving *Syria*. I went some distance to a small pool of water to bathe,

taking my firelock with me ; but ~~none~~ of the savages stirred from their huts, nor seemed to regard me more than if I had lived among them all their lives, though surely I was the most extraordinary sight they had ever seen ; whence I conclude they are a people of small talents or genius, having no curiosity.

As we proceeded, we were now everywhere surrounded by mountains, bleak, bare, black, and covered with loose stones. On the 19th, we encamped at a place called Tubbo, where the mountains are very steep, and broken very abruptly into cliffs and precipices. Tubbo was by much the most agreeable station we had seen ; the trees were thick, full of leaves, and gave us abundance of shade. The trees were of many different kinds, and so closely planted that they seemed to be intended for natural arbours. Every tree was full of birds, variegated with an infinity of colours, but destitute of song ; others, of a more homely and more European appearance, diverted us with a variety of wild notes, in a style of music still distinct and peculiar to Africa, as different in the composition from our linnet and goldfinch, as our English language is from that of Abyssinia. It was observable that the greater part of the beautiful painted birds belonged to the jay or magpie kind.

On the morning of the 20th we reached the foot of Taranta, and halted during the heat of the day. In the afternoon, we began to ascend the mountain by a road of great steepness, full of holes and gullies made by torrents, and often blocked up by huge fragments of rock.

My quadrant had hitherto been carried by eight men, four relieving the others ; but they were now ready to give up the undertaking, upon trial of the first few hundred yards. A number of expedients, such as trailing it on the ground (all equally

fatal to the instrument), were proposed. At last, as I was incomparably the strongest of the company, as well as the most interested, I and Yasine the Moor, recommended to me by Metical Aga, carried the head of it for about four hundred yards, over the most difficult part of the mountain. We carried it steadily up the steep, eased the case gently over the big stones, on which from time to time we rested it; and, to the wonder of all, placed the head of the three-foot quadrant, with its double case, far above the stony parts of the mountain. At Yasine's request we then undertook the task of carrying up the iron foot of the quadrant, and in this, too, we were perfectly successful. Our exertions, however, cost us a good deal, for our hands and knees were cut, and our clothes torn to pieces, by the sharp rocks over which we had to clamber. Shame, and the proof of superior constancy, so humbled the rest of our companions, that one and all put their hands so briskly to work, that, with infinite toil, and as much pleasure, we succeeded in placing all our instruments and baggage about half-way up this terrible mountain of Taranta.

We had five asses, which were fully as difficult to get up the mountain as the baggage. We had carried their burdens up as far as my instruments, and then one of our party began to drive the animals up the mountain. They no sooner, however, found themselves at liberty, than they began to bray, to kick, and to bite each other, and then, with one consent, away they trotted down the hill, with the same jovial cries. All our little caravan, and especially the masters of these animals, saw from above, with despair, all our eagerness to pass Taranta defeated by the secession of the most obstinate of the brute creation! Four Moors, however, who were sent after them, found them a long way down, eating some bushes, and succeeded in bringing them

back safely, though not without some peril from a troop of hyenas.

Next morning, having encouraged my company with good words, increase of wages, and hopes of reward, we began to encounter the other half of the mountain. My baggage moved much more briskly than on the preceding day. The upper part of the mountain was steeper, more craggy, rugged, and slippery than the lower, and impeded more with trees, but not embarrassed so much with large holes and stones. Our knees and hands, however, were cut to pieces by frequent falls, and our faces torn by the multitude of thorny bushes. I twenty times now thought of what Achmet had told me at parting, that I should curse him for the bad road shown to me over Taranta. At last we reached the summit, where there is a small village, chiefly inhabited by poor shepherds, keeping the flocks of men of substance, who live in the town of Dixan. The people here are of a dark sallow complexion. They go with the head uncovered, and wear a goat's skin over their shoulders, a cotton cloth about their waist, and sandals on their feet. Their hair is short, and curled artificially like that of the negro. The men are armed with two lances and a crooked knife. All sorts of cattle are here in plenty. The cows in particular are of great beauty ; they are, for the most part, completely white, with large dewlaps hanging down to their knees ; their horns are wide, and their hair like silk. The sheep are large and black ; their heads are large, their ears small, and instead of wool they have hair, remarkable for its lustre and softness.

The plain on the top of Taranta was in many places sown with wheat, just ready to be cut. The grain was clean, and of a good colour, but inferior in size to that of Egypt. It did not,

however, grow thick, nor was the stalk above fourteen inches high. The water is very bad here, being only what remains of the rain in the hollows of the rocks, and in pits prepared for it.

On the 22d we began to descend the Tigré side of the mountain, and the same evening we reached the town of Dixan. It is built on the top of a hill, shaped like a sugar-loaf ; a deep valley surrounds it, like a trench, on all sides ; and the road winds spirally up the hill till it ends among the houses. Dixan, like most frontier towns, is the rendezvous of the bad people of the contiguous countries. It is inhabited by Moors and Christians, and is very well peopled ; yet the only trade of either is a very extraordinary one—that of selling children. The Christians bring such as they have stolen in Abyssinia to Dixan ; and the Moors, receiving them there, find a sure market for them at Masuah, whence they are sent over to Arabia or India. The priests of Tigré are openly concerned in this infamous practice. A transaction which occurred while I was in Ethiopia, and which was related to me by Ras Michael himself, may serve to illustrate this barbarous system.

Two priests of Tigré, living near the rock Damo, had long been intimate friends. The younger was married and had two children, both sons. One day the old priest reproved his friend for keeping his children at home idle, at the same time offering to place one of them with a rich friend of his own, who had no children, and would be very kind to him. The proposal was gladly accepted, and the boy, who was about ten years of age, was delivered by his father to the old priest, who took him to Dixan, and sold him there. The old priest returned with a splendid account of the boy's reception and prospects, which made *his* brother, who was two years younger, very anxious to pay him

a visit. The old wretch had a scruple about taking charge of one so young, and suggested that the mother should go along with them. This being settled accordingly, he conveyed them to the market at Dixan, and sold them both. Returning to the father, the old priest told him that his wife expected him to come for her by a certain day. When the day arrived, they set out together, and on arriving at Dixan, the old priest finished the transaction by selling his friend. The price of the family was to be forty cotton cloths, or about £10 sterling. It occurred to the Moorish merchants that there would be more profit if they carried off the old priest likewise. They prevailed upon him to accompany them a little way out of the town, when they seized and bound him as their slave. The woman begged to be allowed to pluck off what little beard he had, saying it would make him look younger ; and her demand was readily granted. The whole five were then carried to Masuah, where the woman and her two children were sold into Arabia ; but the two priests did not find so ready a market ; they were both in the Naybe's house when I was in Masuah, though I did not then know it. The Naybe, willing to ingratiate himself with Ras Michael at a small expense, wrote him a letter offering to restore the priests to him ; but the Ras declined the favour, adding that there still remained enough of their kind to carry on the trade with Dixan and Masuah.

The priests of Axum, and those of the monastery of Abba Garima, are equally infamous with those of Damo for this practice, which is winked at by Ras Michael, as contributing to his greatness, by furnishing fire-arms to his province of Tigré, which gives him a superiority over all Abyssinia. As a return for this article, about five hundred unfortunate people are exported annually from Masuah to Arabia. Of these, about two hundred

are Christian children kidnapped ; the rest are Pagans from the market at Gondar. The Naybe receives six patakas of duty for each slave exported.

On November 25th we left Dixan. About mid-day we encamped under a daroo tree, one of the finest I have seen in Abyssinia, being seven and a half feet in diameter, with a head spreading in proportion. The king's servants, now upon their own ground, began to take upon them a proper consequence. One of them made a mark on the ground with his knife, and, declaring that his patience was quite exhausted by what he had seen of the conduct of the Naybe and his servants, said that if Saloomé, or any man belonging to the Naybe, offered to pass that mark, he would bind him hand and foot, and carry him to a place where he would be left a prey to hyenas. The Naybe's people thereupon all left us, and there our persecution from him ended. We remained under the daroo tree that night. It will be to me a station ever memorable, as the first place where I recovered a portion of that tranquillity of mind, to which I had been a stranger ever since my arrival at Masuah.

Next morning we left our pleasant quarters under the daroo tree, and set forward with great alacrity. Our party was increased by several Moors, with twenty loaded asses and two loaded bulls, who had obtained permission to join us the evening before. On our encamping this day near a small village, I had a visit from the Baharnagash, or governor of the district, who resided in it. This nobleman was the first Abyssinian I had seen on horseback. He had seven attendants on horseback, and about a dozen on foot, all of a beggarly appearance, and very ill armed and equipped. He was a little man, of an olive complexion, or *rather* darker ; his head was shaved close, with a cowl upon it ;

he wore a pair of short trousers, with his feet and legs bare ; the usual coarse girdle was wrapped several times about him, and had a knife stuck in it ; and the ordinary web of cotton cloth, neither new nor clean, was thrown about him. After he left us, he sent us a goat and fifty cakes of teff bread, in compliance with the demand of one of the king's servants. But my views upon him did not end here. Among his horses there was a black one that had struck my fancy. In the evening I sent the king's servants, accompanied by Janni's, to see if he would sell the horse. The bargain was immediately struck for various pieces of gold, part of which I had with me, and part I procured from my companions in the caravan. I was exceedingly pleased with this first acquisition. The horse was of the breed of Dongola, and stood about sixteen and a half hands high. I engaged an Arab, one of Yasmine's servants, a superior horseman himself, to take care of him. We called the horse Mirza, a name of good fortune. Indeed, I may say, I acquired that day a companion that contributed always to my pleasure, and more than once to my safety, and was no slender means of acquiring me the first attention of the king. I had brought my Arab stirrups, saddle, and bridle with me, so that I was now as well equipped as a horseman could be.

Our way, for several days, lay through a somewhat picturesque region. Sometimes we passed through a deep gully, presently coming to a pleasant wood of acacia trees in flower ; again reaching the plain, and in a little entering a straggling wood, overgrown with wild oats, so high as to reach above our heads. Our guides warned us that a river in front of us was a rendezvous of the Serawé horse, noted for their depredations on caravans. I here, for the first time, mounted on horseback, to



the great delight of my party, and galloped about, firing my double-barrelled gun when going at full speed. Passing the stream, which was standing in pools, we advanced courageously, meeting with none of the dreaded robbers. Entering now upon a close country, covered with brushwood, we found a fine animal, of the goat species, newly killed by a lion, which had retired on our approach. As the blood was yet flowing, every one, Moor and Christian alike, cut off a large portion of flesh. The aversion of the Abyssinians to anything that has not been regularly killed with the knife is so great, that they will not even lift a bird that has been shot, except by the point or extreme feather of its wing. To this rule, as it now appears, there is an exception. They say they may lawfully eat what is killed by the lion, but not by the tiger, hyena, or any other beast.

We now crossed the river Balezat, a clear, rapid stream, apparently abounding in fish. This was the first river, actually running, that we had seen since we passed Taranta. It is a tributary of the Mareb, the ancient Astusaspes. We were detained on the bank of the Balezat for a duty, or custom, at a ber, or pass. These tolls are farmed by persons residing in a neighbouring village, and are levied in a very arbitrary manner. If you resist these tax-gatherers, the probability is that you will be not only stripped of your property, but also ill-treated in your person. As I was sent for by the king, and going to Ras Michael, in whose province they were, I affected to laugh when they talked of detaining me ; and declared peremptorily to them, that I would leave all my baggage with great pleasure, rather than that the king's life should be in danger by my delay. This staggered them, and they let us pass on payment of a very *small duty*.

On the 1st of December we departed from Balezat, and arrived at Kella, or Castle, so named from the appearance which the mountains present. This height is otherwise called Damo, and was in ancient times the prison of the collateral heirs-male of the royal family. Kella being one of the bers, we were detained there three whole days by the extravagant demands of the tax-gatherers, who laughed at the importance we gave ourselves. They had reasons for our reasons, menaces for our menaces, but no civilities to answer ours. During our detention here, we opened a market with beads, and were plentifully supplied with honey, butter, flour, and pumpkins. I contrived to bribe one of the natives to carry a letter for me to Adowa, to Janni, informing him of our detention. On the fourth day there came an officer from Janni, with a violent mandate, in the name of Ras Michael, ordering the official who had detained us to supply me with provisions and allow me to depart, and fixing the toll to be paid by the whole caravan at less than a twentieth part of what he demanded.

Yasine, during our stay at Kella, told me his whole history. He had been settled in Ras el Feel, a province of Abyssinia, near to Sennaar, where he married the daughter of Abd el Jilleel, the shekh. Growing more popular than his father-in-law, he had been persecuted by him, and obliged to leave the country. He began now to form hopes that, if I was well received, he might, by my interest, be appointed to his father-in-law's place, especially if there was war, as seemed likely. Abd el Jilleel was a coward, while Yasine was a man of tried courage, having twice already distinguished himself on the field of battle. I was thoroughly convinced that Yasine deserved preferment; but I had not as yet any idea that I might be able to assist him.

We resumed our journey on the afternoon of the 4th. After passing two small rivulets, we came to a considerable river, called Angueah, on the farther bank of which we encamped. This stream was the largest we had yet seen in Abyssinia. It was about fifty feet broad, three deep, clear and rapid, and full of small fish. This river has its name from a beautiful tree which covers its banks. There is a profusion of flowers, particularly jessamine, yellow, white, and parti-coloured, in the level ground between the mountain and the stream. The country seemed now to put on a more favourable aspect; the air was much fresher, and more pleasant. We now began to see the high mountains of Adowa, nothing resembling in shape those of Europe, or, indeed, any other country. Their sides were all perpendicular rocks, like steeples or obelisks, broken into a thousand different forms.

Halting, on the 5th, at Ribieraini, once noted as a station of banditti, we next day proceeded on our journey; and after travelling for three hours on a very pleasant road, over easy hills, and through hedge-rows of jessamine, honey-suckle, and other flowering shrubs, we arrived at Adowa.

## CHAPTER X.

*From Adowa to Gondar—Hospitality of Janni—The Ruins of Axum—Steaks from a living Cow—The River Tacazzé—Hyenas—Altercation with the Shum of Addergey—Waldubba and its Monks—I perform feats of Horsemanship and Shooting at Lamalmon, and fraternize with a young Soldier—Gondar at last !*

**A**DOWA, once the residence of Michael Suhul, governor of Tigré, is situated on the declivity of a hill, on the west side of a small plain, watered by three rivulets which are never dry in summer, and surrounded on all sides by mountains. Its situation accounts for its name, which signifies *pass* or *passage*, as everybody travelling between Gondar and the Red Sea must come this way. Adowa consists of about three hundred houses, each of which has an enclosure round it, marked off by trees and hedges. The mansion of Ras Michael was situated on the top of a hill, and differed only in size from the other houses of the town. In Michael's absence it was occupied by his deputy. It resembled a prison rather than a palace ; for there were in and about it above three hundred people, who were confined in irons, the object being to extract money from them. Some of them had been there for twenty years ; and most of them were kept in cages like wild beasts, and treated every way in the same manner.

Our kind and hospitable landlord Janni had sent servants to conduct us from the passage of the river ; and he met us himself at the outer door of his house. I do not remember having seen a more respectable figure. He had his own short white hair, covered with a thin muslin turban, and a thick well-shaped beard, as white as snow, down to his waist. He was clothed in the Abyssinian dress, all of white cotton, only he had a red silk sash, embroidered with gold, about his waist, and sandals on his feet ; his upper garment reached down to his ankles. He had a number of servants and slaves about him, of both sexes ; and, when I approached him, seemed disposed to receive me with marks of humility and inferiority, which mortified me much, considering the obligations I was under to him, and the trouble I had given, and was unavoidably still to give him. I embraced him with great acknowledgments of kindness and gratitude, calling him father—a title I always used in speaking either to him or of him afterwards when I was in higher fortune, which he constantly remembered with great pleasure.

He conducted us to a handsome apartment, furnished with a silk sofa, and its floor covered with Persian carpets and cushions. All round, flowers and green leaves were strewed upon the outer yard ; and the windows and sides of the room were adorned with evergreens, in honour of the Christmas festival that was at hand. I stopped at the entrance of this room, for my feet were both dirty and bloody. He was so shocked that I had performed this terrible journey on foot, that he burst into tears, uttering a thousand reproaches against the Naybe for his hard-heartedness and ingratitude, as he had twice hindered Michael from going in person to Masuah, and sweeping the Naybe from the face of the earth. Water was immediately procured, and it was with a good deal

of difficulty that I prevented my kind landlord from himself washing my feet.

This finished, a great dinner was brought, exceedingly well dressed. But no consideration or entreaty could prevail upon Janni to sit down and partake with me; he would stand all the time, with a clean towel in his hand, though he had plenty of servants. It was long before I could cure him of these respectful observances—his own kindness of heart, as well as the pointed and particular orders of the Greek patriarch, Mark, constantly suggesting the same attention.

In the afternoon I had a visit from the governor, a tall, fine-looking man, of about sixty years of age. He had just returned from an expedition against some rebel villages, which he had destroyed, killing a hundred and twenty men, and driving off some cattle. He told me he much doubted whether I should be allowed to pass through Waggora, unless some favourable news came from Michael; as the people of that district refused to acknowledge Michael or submit to the king, and were plundering all sorts of people going to Gondar with provisions or any thing else, in order to distress the king, and the troops of Michael, who were then there.

Adowa is the seat of a very valuable manufacture of coarse cotton cloth. The houses are all of rough stone, cemented with mud instead of mortar. The roofs are in the form of cones, and thatched with a strong grass. The Jews have the monopoly of the thatching. In all this neighbourhood there are three harvests annually. Their first seed time is in July and August, in the middle of the rains, when they sow wheat, tucusso, teff, and barley. From the 20th of November, they reap first their barley, then their wheat, and last of all their teff. They then sow on the

same ground, without any manure, barley, which they reap in February, when they sow their third crop, which is generally a kind of vetch, and is ready to be cut before the beginning of the rains in April.

The province of Tigré is all mountainous. It is not the extreme height of the mountains of Abyssinia that occasions surprise ; but the number of them, and the extraordinary forms they present to the eye. Some of them are flat, thin, and square, in shape of a hearth-stone or slab, that scarce would seem to have been sufficient to resist the action of the winds. Some are like pyramids, others like obelisks or prisms, and some, the most extraordinary of all, pyramids pitched upon their points, with their base uppermost, which, if it was possible, as it is not, they could have been so formed in the beginning, would be strong objections to our received ideas of gravity.

On the 10th of January 1770, I visited the remains of the Jesuits' convent at Fremona. It is built upon the ridge of a high hill, and is nearly a mile in circumference. The towers at the angles, and the walls, substantially built of stones cemented with mortar, and loop-holed for musketry, make it look more like an ancient castle than a convent.

A kind of calm having by this time spread over the country, I wished to take advantage of it, and set out immediately for Gondar. Accordingly, we set out from Adowa, on our way to Gondar, on the 17th ; and on the following day reached the plain in which stood Axum, supposed to be the ancient capital of Abyssinia ; though, for my part, I believe it to have been rather the metropolis of the trading people, or troglodyte Ethiopians, called properly Cushites. The ruins of Axum are very extensive, but, like the cities of ancient times, consist altogether of public build-

ings. In one square, which seems to have been the centre of the town, there are forty obelisks, each of one piece of granite, and carved with the door-bolt and lock, as if to represent an entrance to some building behind. On the top of one which is still standing, there is a patera, exceedingly well executed in the Greek taste. After passing the convent of Abba Pantaleon, called in Abyssinia, Mantilles, and the small obelisk situated on a rock above, we proceed south by a road cut in a mountain of red marble, having on the left a parapet wall about five feet high, solid, and of the same materials. At equal distances there are hewn in this wall solid pedestals, upon the tops of which we see the marks where stood the colossal statues of Sirius, the Latrator Anubis, or Dog Star. One hundred and thirty-three of these pedestals, with the marks of the statues just mentioned, are still in their places; but only two figures of the dog remained when I was there, much mutilated, but easily distinguished as Egyptian. These are composed of granite, but some of them appear to have been of metal. There are likewise pedestals, whereon the figures of the Sphinx have been placed. Two magnificent flights of steps, several hundred feet long, all of granite, exceedingly well fashioned, and still in their places, are the only remains of a great temple. Within the site of this temple is a small modern church, a mean building, very ill kept. In it are supposed to be preserved the ark of the covenant, and copy of the law, which Menilek, the son of Solomon, is said, in their fabulous legends, to have stolen from his father in his return to Ethiopia; and these were reckoned, as it were, the palladia of the country. There was another relic of great importance—a picture of the head of Christ, crowned with thorns, said to have been painted by St. Luke. This relic, on occasions of great importance, especially in a war with



Mahometans and Pagans, is brought out and carried with the army.

Within the outer gate of the church, below the steps, are three small square inclosures, all of granite, with small octagon pillars in the angles, apparently Egyptian ; on the top of which formerly were small images of the Dog Star, probably of metal. Upon a stone in the middle of one of these, the kings of the country have been crowned since the days of Paganism ; and below it is a large oblong slab of freestone, on which the feet rest. The inscription, though much defaced, may be safely restored :—

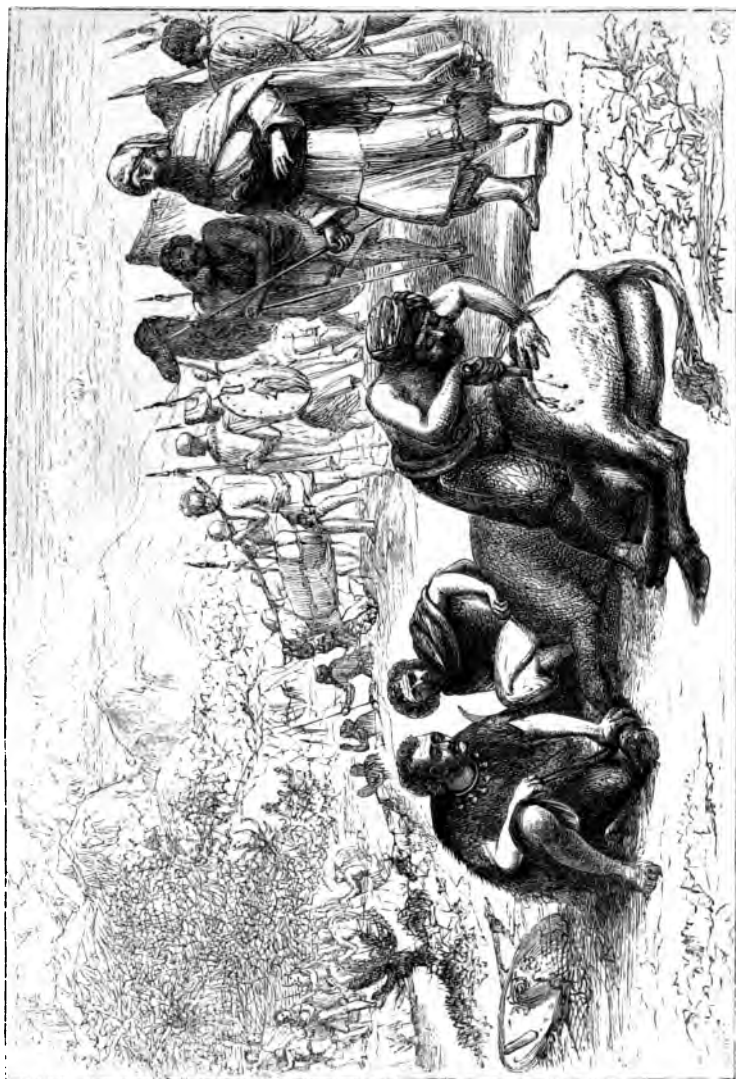
ΠΤΟΛΕΜΑΙΟΥ ΕΥΕΡΓΕΤΟΥ  
ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ.\*

On the 20th of January we left Axum. The road, at first somewhat difficult and toilsome, became afterwards very pleasing. The country round was exceedingly beautiful, the climate mild, and the air impregnated with the delicious odour of jessamine and other flowers.

Not long after losing sight of the ruins of this ancient capital of Abyssinia, we overtook three travellers driving a cow before them. They had black goat-skins upon their shoulders, and lances and shields in their hands, and appeared to be soldiers. The cow did not seem to be fattened for killing, and it occurred to us all that it had been stolen. This, however, was not our business. Our attendants attached themselves, in a particular manner, to the three soldiers, and held a short conversation with them. The drivers suddenly tripped up the cow, and gave the poor animal a very rude fall. One of them sat across her neck, holding down her head by the horns, the other twisted the halter about her forefeet, while the third, who

\* *Of King Ptolemy Euergetes (or the Beneficent).*





This awakened my curiosity. let my people go forward and stayed till saw, with the utmost astonishment, two pieces, thicker and longer than our ordinary beef-steaks, cut out of the higher part of the buttock of the beast.—P. 165.

had a knife in his hand, instead of taking her by the throat, got astride upon her belly, and, to my very great surprise, gave her a deep wound in the upper part of her buttock.

From the time I had seen them throw the beast upon the ground, I had rejoiced, thinking that when three people were killing a cow, they must have agreed to sell part of her to us ; and I was much disappointed on hearing the Abyssinians say that we were not to encamp here. Upon my proposing that they should bargain for part of the cow, my men answered, what they had already learned in conversation, that they were not then going to kill her, that she was not wholly theirs, and they could not sell her. This awakened my curiosity. I let my people go forward ; and stayed till I saw, with the utmost astonishment, two pieces, thicker and longer than our ordinary beef-steaks, cut out of the higher part of the buttock of the beast. How it was done, I cannot positively say ; but it was accomplished very adroitly, and the two pieces were spread on the outside of one of their shields.

One of them continued holding the head, while the other two were busied in curing the wound. This, too, was done not in an ordinary manner. The skin which had covered the flesh that was taken away, and had been flapped back during the operation, was now brought over the wound, and fastened to the corresponding part with small skewers or pins. Whether they had put anything under the skin, I know not ; but at the river side, where they were, they had prepared a cataplasm of clay, with which they covered the wound. They then forced the animal to rise, and drove it forward, to furnish them with a fuller meal, when they should meet their companions in the evening.

When first I mentioned this in England, as one of the

singularities which prevailed in this barbarous country, I was told by my friends it was not believed. I asked the reason of this disbelief, and was answered, that people who had never been out of their own country, and others well acquainted with the manners of the world (for they had travelled as far as France), had agreed the thing was impossible, and therefore it was so. My friends counselled me farther, that as these men were infallible, and had each the leading of a circle, I should by all means obliterate this from my journal, and not attempt to inculcate in the minds of my readers the belief of a thing that men who had travelled pronounced to be impossible. Far from being a convert to such prudential reasons, I must for ever profess openly, that I think them unworthy of me. To represent as truth a thing I know to be a falsehood; not to avow a truth which I know I ought to declare—the one is fraud, the other cowardice. I hope I am equally distant from both; and I pledge myself never to retract the fact here advanced, that the Abyssinians do feed in common upon live flesh; and that I myself have, for several years, been partaker of that disagreeable and beastly diet. I have no doubt that, when time shall be given to read this history to an end, there will be very few, if they have candour enough to own it, that will not be ashamed of having ever doubted.

We encamped this day in a small plain, on the bank of a clear and rapid stream; the spot is called Mai-Shum. A peasant, who had a neat little garden on both sides of the rivulet, brought a present of fruits, and begged our assistance against a number of wild boars, which carried havoc through all his labours. We accordingly went in search of them, and in two *hours* succeeded in killing five large boars. But the misfortune

was, that, though so successful in hunting, we did not dare to partake of the excellent venison we had acquired ; for the Abyssinians hold pork in the utmost detestation ; and, being so near to the capital, I was unwilling to give any offence.

On the 21st, we reached a plain called Selech-lecha. Poncet\* was right, when he compared the country here to the most beautiful part of Provence. Fine trees of all sizes were everywhere interspersed ; and the vine, with small black grapes of very good flavour, hung in many places in festoons, joining tree to tree, as if they had been artificially twined and intended for arbours. The jessamine and honeysuckle added much to the richness and beauty of the scene.

Passing this cheerful plain, we entered a wood, and pitched our tent by the side of a stream. There we were assailed with a shower of stones, one of which gave me a violent blow on the foot. I went forward in the direction from which the stones came, calling out that we were friends of Ras Michael, and wished to speak with our assailants. Two men thereupon approached, and complained that a Moor of our party had taken a heap of straw and carried it off for his ass ! This was a mere pretence ; for these people make no use of straw, except to burn it. A report had spread that a battle had taken place between Fasil and Ras Michael, in which the latter had been defeated ; and these people thought they might safely practise any extortion or violence upon us. I told them that though, as the king's guest, I had a title to be furnished with what was necessary, I was content to pay for everything they furnished, both for my men and beasts ; but they must throw no stones,

\* A translation of Poncet's *Travels in Abyssinia* will be found in Pinkerton's series of *Voyages and Travels*, vol. xiv.

otherwise we would defend ourselves. A treaty followed, and they consented to sell us what we wanted, but at extravagant prices.

Late at night, on the 22d, we arrived at Siré, the chief town of the province of the same name. The town of Siré is larger than Axum, and is in form of a half-moon fronting the plain. The houses are of clay, with conical thatched roofs. Though situated in one of the finest countries in the world, Siré is subject to putrid fevers of the very worst kind. Many people were dying daily from one of these fevers when I was there ; but as the behaviour of the inhabitants of this province to me was not such as required my exposing myself to infection for the sake of relieving them, I left the fever and them to settle accounts together, without anywise interfering.

At Siré we heard the good news that Ras Michael, on the 10th of this month, had completely defeated Fasil, killing ten thousand of his men. This intelligence had the effect of striking awe into the mutinously disposed inhabitants of this province, who might otherwise have annoyed or even plundered us on our advance.

We left Siré on the 24th, and on the 26th reached the river Tacazzé, which is the boundary of the province. This is one of the pleasantest rivers in the world. It is shaded with fine lofty trees, and its banks are covered with bushes that yield an exquisite fragrance. The water is pure and good, and abounds with fish, as the covers on the bank do with game. Beautiful and pleasant, however, as this river is, like everything created, it has its disadvantages. From the falling of the first rains, in March, till November, it is death to sleep in the country adjoining to it,

*th within and without its banks ; the whole inhabitants retire*

and live in villages on the top of the neighbouring mountains ; and these are all robbers and assassins, who descend from their habitations in the heights to lie in wait for, and plunder the travellers that pass. In spite of all the efforts of the governors of Tigré and Siré to clear this passage, people are cut off here every month.

The abundance of fish causes the river to be much infested by crocodiles. When the river swells, so as to be passable only by people on rafts or skins blown up with wind, they are frequently carried off by these voracious and vigilant animals. There are also many hippopotami, here called gomari. Hyenas and lions also haunt the thickets ; but, though they prowled near, they did not do us any harm.

For several days after this, our way lay through a district resembling those we had recently passed. We frequently came to ruined villages, the monuments of Ras Michael's cruelty or justice, for it is hard to say whether the robberies and violence of the people who lived in them did not merit the punishment he had inflicted. On the 30th, we encamped at Addergey, near a small stream called Mai Lumi, the river of limes, so called from the abundance of this fruit in the adjoining wood.

The hyenas this night devoured one of our best mules. They are here in great plenty, and so are lions ; the roaring and grumbling of the latter greatly disturbed our beasts, and prevented them from eating their provender. I lengthened the strings of my tent, and placed the beasts between them. The white ropes, and the tremulous motion produced by the wind, assisted by the noise of two small brass bells, such as mules carry, which I had attached to the storm strings of the tent, frightened the lions from coming near us. The brutish hyena, however, was not to be so deterred



I shot one dead on the night of the 31st of January, and on the 2d of February I fired at another so near, that I was confident of killing him. Whether the ball had fallen out, or I had really missed him with the first barrel, I know not, but he gave a snarl and a kind of bark upon the first shot, advancing directly upon me, as if unhurt. The second shot, however, took effect, and laid him without motion on the ground. Yasmine and his men killed another with a pike ; yet, such was their determined coolness, that they stalked round about us with a familiarity like that of domestic animals.

But we were still more incommoded by a smaller animal, a black ant, nearly an inch long. These insects, coming out from under the ground, demolished the carpets, which they cut into shreds, part of the lining of the tent, and every bag or sack they could find. Their bite causes a considerable inflammation, and the pain is greater than that which arises from the bite of a scorpion ; they are called *gundan*.

On the 1st of February, the Shum (local magistrate) sent his people to value, as he said, our merchandise, that we might pay custom. I humoured them so far as to open the cases which contained the telescopes and quadrant. They could only wonder at things they had never before seen. Next day the Shum came himself, and a violent altercation ensued. He insisted upon Michael's defeat. I told him the contrary news were true, and begged him to beware lest it should be told to the Ras upon his return that he had propagated such a falsehood. I told him also we had advice that the Ras's servants were now waiting for us at Lamalmon, and insisted on his suffering us to depart. On the other hand, he threatened to send us to Ayto Tesfos. I answered  
*I would not suffer him to send me either to Ayto Tesfos, or*

an inch out of the road in which I was going. He said that I was mad, and held a consultation with his people for half an hour, after which he came in again, seemingly quite another man, and said he would dispatch us on the morrow, and would meanwhile send us some provisions. Indeed, we began to be in need, having barely flour to serve for one meal next day. None of the people had come near us to traffic, probably by the Shum's order. As he had softened his tone, so did I mine. I gave him a small present, and he went away repeating his promises. But neither that evening, nor all next day, did any provisions make their appearance ; and breakfast was our only meal.

On the morning of the 4th, we were early astir, hunger pressing us to take our departure from this inhospitable place. While we were getting ready to start, a hyena fastened upon one of Yasmine's asses, almost pulling the tail away. A boy, servant to Yasmine, was the first to observe it, and flew to my musket, which was standing against a tree. Yasmine, who was disjoining the poles of the tent, and had one half of the largest in his hand, ran to the assistance of his ass ; and at that moment the musket went off. Luckily it was charged with only one ball, and Yasmine escaped with a flesh wound between the thumb and forefinger of his left hand. The hyena let go the ass, but stood ready to fight Yasmine, who, not particular about the choice of weapons, gave him so rude a blow on the head with the tent pole, that it felled him to the ground ; others, with pikes, put an end to his life.

We were then obliged to turn our cares towards the wounded. Yasmine's wound was soon seen to be a trifle ; but the poor ass was not so easily comforted. The stump remained, the tail hanging by a piece of it, which we were obliged to cut off. The next operation was actual cautery ; but, as we had made no

bread for breakfast, our fire had been early out. We were, therefore, obliged to tie the stump round with whipcord, till we could get fire enough to heat an iron. On account of this affair, we were not able to leave Addergey till near ten o'clock in the forenoon.

We had just reached the bank of a considerable tributary of the Tacazzé, when we saw the Shum advancing from the right, attended by nine horsemen and fourteen or fifteen beggarly footmen. The Shum himself had only a whip in his hand, but a well-dressed young man went before him carrying his gun. As the Shum's government ended on this side of the stream, we made all haste to cross it. As soon as they observed us driving our beasts into the river, one of their horsemen came galloping up, while the others continued at a smart walk. When the horseman was within twenty yards of me, I called on him to stop, if he valued his life. He made no difficulty to obey, but seemed rather inclined to turn back. As I saw the baggage all laid on the ground at the foot of a small round hill, upon the gentle ascent of which my servants all stood armed, I turned my horse, and, with Yasmine, who was by my side, began to cross the river. The horseman upon this again advanced ; again I cried to him to stop. He then pointed behind him, and said, "The Shum !" I desired him peremptorily to stop, or I would fire ; upon which he turned round, and, the others joining him, they held a minute's counsel together, and came all forward to the river, where they paused a moment, as if counting our number, and then began to enter the stream. Yasmine now cried to them in Amharic, as I had done before in Tigré, desiring them, as they valued their lives, to come no nearer. They stopped, a sign of no great resolution ; and, after some altercation, it was agreed that the *Shum*, and his son with the gun, should pass the river.

The Shum complained violently that we had left Addergey without his leave, and now were attacking him in his own government upon the high road. "A pretty situation," said I, "was ours at Addergey, where the Shum left the king's stranger no other alternative but dying with hunger, or being eaten by the hyena. Now pray, Shum, tell me what is your business with me? and why have you followed me beyond your government, which is bounded by that river?" He said I had stolen away privately, without paying custom. "I am no merchant," replied I; "I am the king's guest, and pay no custom; but, as far as a piece of red Surat cotton cloth will content you, I will give it you, and we shall part friends." He answered, that two ounces of gold were what my dues had been rated at; and he would either have that, or follow me to Debra Toon. "Bind him, and carry him to Debra Toon," says the Siré servant, "or I shall go and bring the Shum of Debra Toon to do it. By the head of Michael, Shum, it shall not be long before I take you out of your bed for this!"

I now gave orders to my people to load the mules. On hearing this, the Shum made a signal to his company to cross, but Yasmine, who was opposite them, again ordered them to stop. "Shum," said I, "you intend to follow us, apparently with a design to do us some harm. Now we are going to Debra Toon, and you are going thither. If you choose to go with us, you may, in all honour and safety; but your servants shall not be allowed to join you; and if they attempt to do us harm, we will for certain avenge ourselves on you. There is a piece of ordnance"—showing him a large blunderbus—"a cannon that will sweep fifty such fellows as you to eternity in a moment."

The conversation lasted about five minutes; and our baggage

was now on the way, when the Shum said he would make a proposal. Since I had no merchandise, and was going to Ras Michael, he would accept of the red cloth, provided we swore to make no complaint of him at Gondar, nor speak at Debra Toon of what had happened here ; while he likewise would swear, that after he joined his servants, he would not again pass that river." Peace was concluded upon these terms. I gave him a piece of red Surat cotton cloth, and added some cohob, incense, and beads for his wives. The Shum returned, with a not very placid countenance; his horsemen joined him in the middle of the stream, and away they went together, soberly, and in silence.

At one o'clock we alighted at the foot of Debra Toon, one of the highest mountains in the romantic range of Hanza. The village of Debra Toon was about a mile distant. The mountains of Waldubba lay north of us about four miles. Waldubba, which signifies the Valley of the Hyena, is a territory entirely inhabited by monks, who, for mortification's sake, have retired to this unwholesome, hot, and dangerous country, voluntarily to spend their lives in penitence, meditation, and prayer. This, too, is the retreat of great men in disgrace, or in disgust. They shave their hair, put on a cowl like the monks, renouncing the world for solitude, and taking vows which they resolve to keep no longer than exigencies require ; after which they return to the world again, leaving their cowl and sanctity at Waldubba.

These monks are held in great veneration, and are believed by many to have the gifts of prophecy and working miracles. They are very active instruments in stirring up the people in times of trouble. None of them that I have ever seen exhibited *any marks of abstinence and mortification* ; and I was told that

the life they lead in Waldubba is not precisely what one would expect of holy hermits.

Violent fevers perpetually reign there. The inhabitants are all of the colour of a corpse. Their neighbours, the Shangalla, by constant inroads, destroy many of them, though lately they have been stopped, as they say, by the prayers of the monks. The *natural cause*, however, why the Shangalla have ceased to molest them, is to be found in the small-pox, which has greatly reduced their strength and number, and indeed exterminated whole tribes of them.

Since passing the Tacazzé, we had been in a country wild by nature, but much more so from having been the theatre of civil war. The whole was a wilderness, almost destitute of inhabitants. When we reached Dippebaha, however, on the evening of the 7th, the character of the scenery changed. Before us was a fine plain, the rich verdure of which was pleasantly interspersed with flowering shrubs, jessamines, and roses. Numerous persons passing to and fro served to give additional cheerfulness to the scene. We here saw several of the monks and nuns of Waldubba. The women were stout and young, and did not seem to have been long in the mortifications of their convent ; but the men seemed very miserable and ill-clothed, and had an air of great ferocity and pride.

Next day we reached Lamalmon, the last pass or ber on the way to Gondar. The persons whose right it was to levy contributions here were an old man and his son. The former professed a violent hatred to all Mahometans, on account of their religion—a sentiment which seemed to promise nothing favourable to our friend Yasine and his companions ; but in the evening his son, who seemed to be the active man, came to our tent, and

bread for breakfast, our fire had been early out. We were, therefore, obliged to tie the stump round with whipcord, till we could get fire enough to heat an iron. On account of this affair, we were not able to leave Addergey till near ten o'clock in the forenoon.

We had just reached the bank of a considerable tributary of the Tacazzé, when we saw the Shum advancing from the right, attended by nine horsemen and fourteen or fifteen beggarly footmen. The Shum himself had only a whip in his hand, but a well-dressed young man went before him carrying his gun. As the Shum's government ended on this side of the stream, we made all haste to cross it. As soon as they observed us driving our beasts into the river, one of their horsemen came galloping up, while the others continued at a smart walk. When the horseman was within twenty yards of me, I called on him to stop, if he valued his life. He made no difficulty to obey, but seemed rather inclined to turn back. As I saw the baggage all laid on the ground at the foot of a small round hill, upon the gentle ascent of which my servants all stood armed, I turned my horse, and, with Yasmine, who was by my side, began to cross the river. The horseman upon this again advanced ; again I cried to him to stop. He then pointed behind him, and said, "The Shum !" I desired him peremptorily to stop, or I would fire ; upon which he turned round, and, the others joining him, they held a minute's counsel together, and came all forward to the river, where they paused a moment, as if counting our number, and then began to enter the stream. Yasmine now cried to them in Amharic, as I had done before in Tigré, desiring them, as they valued their lives, to come no nearer. They stopped, a sign of no great resolution ; and, after some altercation, it was agreed that the *Shum, and his son* with the gun, should pass the river.

The Shum complained violently that we had left Addergey without his leave, and now were attacking him in his own government upon the high road. "A pretty situation," said I, "was ours at Addergey, where the Shum left the king's stranger no other alternative but dying with hunger, or being eaten by the hyena. Now pray, Shum, tell me what is your business with me? and why have you followed me beyond your government, which is bounded by that river?" He said I had stolen away privately, without paying custom. "I am no merchant," replied I; "I am the king's guest, and pay no custom; but, as far as a piece of red Surat cotton cloth will content you, I will give it you, and we shall part friends." He answered, that two ounces of gold were what my dues had been rated at; and he would either have that, or follow me to Debra Toon. "Bind him, and carry him to Debra Toon," says the Siré servant, "or I shall go and bring the Shum of Debra Toon to do it. By the head of Michael, Shum, it shall not be long before I take you out of your bed for this!"

I now gave orders to my people to load the mules. On hearing this, the Shum made a signal to his company to cross, but Yasmine, who was opposite them, again ordered them to stop. "Shum," said I, "you intend to follow us, apparently with a design to do us some harm. Now we are going to Debra Toon, and you are going thither. If you choose to go with us, you may, in all honour and safety; but your servants shall not be allowed to join you; and if they attempt to do us harm, we will for certain avenge ourselves on you. There is a piece of ordnance"—showing him a large blunderbus—"a cannon that will sweep fifty such fellows as you to eternity in a moment."

The conversation lasted about five minutes; and our baggage



was now on the way, when the Shum said he would make a proposal. Since I had no merchandise, and was going to Ras Michael, he would accept of the red cloth, provided we swore to make no complaint of him at Gondar, nor speak at Debra Toon of what had happened here ; while he likewise would swear, that after he joined his servants, he would not again pass that river." Peace was concluded upon these terms. I gave him a piece of red Surat cotton cloth, and added some cohob, incense, and beads for his wives. The Shum returned, with a not very placid countenance ; his horsemen joined him in the middle of the stream, and away they went together, soberly, and in silence.

At one o'clock we alighted at the foot of Debra Toon, one of the highest mountains in the romantic range of Hanza. The village of Debra Toon was about a mile distant. The mountains of Waldubba lay north of us about four miles. Waldubba, which signifies the Valley of the Hyena, is a territory entirely inhabited by monks, who, for mortification's sake, have retired to this unwholesome, hot, and dangerous country, voluntarily to spend their lives in penitence, meditation, and prayer. This, too, is the retreat of great men in disgrace, or in disgust. They shave their hair, put on a cowl like the monks, renouncing the world for solitude, and taking vows which they resolve to keep no longer than exigencies require ; after which they return to the world again, leaving their cowl and sanctity at Waldubba.

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brought us a quantity of bread and bouza. He seemed to be much taken with our firearms, and was very inquisitive about them. I gave him every sort of satisfaction, and, little by little, saw I might win his heart entirely ; which I very much wished to do, that I might free our companions from bondage.

The young man, it seems, was a good soldier ; and, having been in several actions under Ras Michael as a fusileer, he brought his gun, and insisted on shooting at marks. I humoured him in this ; but, as I used a rifle, which he did not understand, he found himself overmatched, especially by the greatness of the range, for he shot straight enough. I then showed him the way we shot flying, there being quails in abundance, and wild pigeons, of which I killed several on the wing, which left him in the utmost astonishment. Having got on horseback, I next went through the exercise of the Arabs, with a long spear and a short javelin. This was more within his comprehension, as he had seen something like it ; but he was wonderfully taken with the fierce and fiery appearance of my horse, and at the same time with his docility. At last he threw the sandals off his feet, twisted his upper garment into his girdle, and set off at so furious a rate that I could not help doubting whether he was in his sober understanding.

It was not long till he came back, and with him a manservant carrying a sheep and a goat, and a woman carrying a jar of honey-wine. I had not yet dismounted ; and, when I saw what his intention was, I put Mirza to a gallop, and, with one of the barrels of the gun, shot a pigeon, and immediately fired the other into the ground. There was nothing after this that could have surprised him, and it was repeated several times at *his desire* ; after which he went into the tent, where he invited

himself to my house at Gondar. There I was to teach him everything he had seen. We now swore perpetual friendship ; and a horn or two of hydromel being emptied, I introduced the case of our fellow-travellers, and obtained a promise that we should have leave to set out together. He would moreover take no awide,\* and said he would be favourable in his report to Gondar.

Matters were so far advanced when a servant of Michael's arrived, sent by Petros, Janni's brother, who had obtained him from Ozoro Esther. This put an end to all our difficulties. Our young soldier also kept his word, and a mere trifle of awide was given, rather by the Moors' own desire than from demand ; and the report of our baggage, and dues thereon, were as low as could be wished. The servant brought news that Michael had beaten Fasil, and forced him to retire to the other side of the Nile. This was just what I could have wished, as it brought me at once to the neighbourhood of the sources of the Nile, without any fear or danger.

The remaining part of the ascent of Lamalmon was toilsome, though not so much so as that which we had already encountered. Reaching the top, we found it to be an extensive table-land of great fertility. The husbandman has only his own indolence to blame if he does not here reap three harvests in the year. As we advanced, the aspect of the country and its inhabitants continued sensibly to improve ; and several caravans which we met were a sufficient evidence of the restored tranquillity of this part of the country.

After having suffered, with infinite patience and perseverance, the hardships and dangers of this long and painful journey, we were at length, on the 14th of February, gratified by seeing before us, at a distance of ten miles, Gondar, the metropolis of Abyssinia !

\* Present, or duty.

## CHAPTER XI.

*Gondar—I am summoned to Koscam, as Physician—An interview with the Iteghé—Abba Salama—Triumphant Entry of the Royal Army into Gondar—First Interview with Ras Michael—and with the King—I am made Baalomaal—A drunken squabble—I shoot a Candle through a Table.*

GONDAR, the metropolis of Abyssinia, is situated on the flat summit of a hill of considerable height, and consists of about 10,000 families in times of peace. The houses are chiefly of clay, with roofs thatched in the form of cones—the common construction within the tropical rains. At the west end of the town is the king's house, formerly a structure of considerable consequence. It is a square building, flanked with towers, and was originally four storeys high, though now only two floors remain entire. These, however, contain ample accommodation, the audience-chamber being above 120 feet long. The upper storeys of the towers must have commanded a magnificent view of the country, southward to the great lake Tzana.

The palace and its contiguous buildings are surrounded by a substantial stone wall, thirty feet high. This wall, which is a circuit of a mile and a half, has no embrasures for cannon.

Immediately opposite to Gondar, on the other side of the river Angrab, is a large town of Mahometans, of about 1000 houses. These are all active and laborious people ; great part

of them are employed in taking care of the baggage and field equipage of the king and the nobility. A little way from Gondar, to the north, is Koscam, the palace of the Iteghé.

We were much surprised, on arriving at the Angrab, to find that no person had come to us from Petros, Janni's brother. We found afterwards that he had taken fright at some menacing words from the priests, on hearing that a Frank was on his way to Gondar, and that he had gone to the Ras for directions concerning us. This was a most disagreeable occurrence, as there was not a single person to whom I could address myself for anything. My letters to the king and Ras Michael were of no present use, as they were both absent, and Petros and the other Greeks, to whom I had recommendations, were also out of town.

I had letters from Janni to Negadé Ras Mahomet, the chief of the Moors at Gondar; but, unfortunately, he too was absent with the army. Hagi Saleh, however, a friend of his, desired me not to be discouraged, informing me that I might have the use of a house which had been provided for Mahomet Gibberti, till such time as Petros or Ras Michael should return to Gondar. I readily embraced the proposal, and found the accommodation very comfortable. Provisions were abundant, but I could not touch animal food, because, being killed by Mahometans, my eating of it would have been looked upon as a renunciation of Christianity.

Janni had sent a letter to Ayto Aylo, the queen's chamberlain, the constant patron of the Greeks, and indeed of the white people of all communions, who had hitherto been unhappy enough to stray into Abyssinia. He professed great veneration for the priesthood of his own country, but thoroughly detested them in his heart. He always declared that he would willingly

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give up his large estates, and the rank he held in Abyssinia, in order to go to Jerusalem and end his days in the convent of the Holy Sepulchre ; but his real inclination was to go to Rome.

About seven o'clock in the evening of my arrival, Hagi Saleh was much alarmed at seeing a number of armed men at his door, and his surprise was still greater upon seeing Ayto Aylo (who, so far as I know, was never in the Moorish town before) descend from his mule, and uncover his head and shoulders, as if he had been approaching a person of the first distinction. A contention of civilities immediately followed. I offered to stand till Aylo was covered, and he would not sit till I was seated. Our discourse began in Arabic, with some embarrassment on both sides ; but it was soon continued in Tigré, the language most used in Gondar. Aylo was exceedingly astonished at hearing me speak the language as I did, and remarked to Saleh and the bystanders, "Come, come, he'll do ! If he can speak, there is no fear of him ; he'll make his way !"

He then told us that Welled Hawaryat, the son of Ras Michael, had come from the camp, ill of a fever, and that they were afraid it was the small-pox. The Iteghé had heard that I had saved many lives of young people at Adowa, and desired Aylo to bring me next morning to the palace at Koscam, where the patient was lying. On the following morning, accordingly, attended by Hagi Saleh and Yasmine, and dressed in a Moorish costume, I went to Ayto Aylo, and we all set out for the palace. As soon as we came in sight of it, we all uncovered our heads, and rode slowly. On alighting we were shown into a low room, where we remained for two hours, while Ayto Aylo was with the queen. Aylo returned with the news that Welled Hawaryat was *much* better, having taken the prescription of a saint from Wal-

dubba, which consisted of certain characters written with common ink upon a tin plate, then washed off with a medicinal liquor, and given him to drink.

When we returned home, I found that Petros had arrived, and was waiting for me. He was in a lamentable state of fright, having seen the stuffed skin of an intimate friend of his swinging upon a tree, and drying in the wind, beside the tent of Ras Michael. This spectacle had so horrified him, that he had returned to Gondar without even having seen the Ras. Aylo, to whose house we went at night, appeared to be equally afraid. As it seemed likely that they would be kept awake all night, talking over this affair, I bade them make some gruel, into which I put a good doze of laudanum, telling them to take it and go to bed. When I was taking my leave, Aylo told me that Welled Hawaryat was very ill, and that the Iteghé and Ozoro Esther his mother, desired me to come and see him next day. One of Welled Hawaryat's daughters, also, was seriously ill, and her mother wished me to see her. "Look, Ayto Aylo," said I, "the small-pox is a disease that will have its course; and, during the long time the patient is under it, if people feed them and treat them according to their own ignorant prejudices, my seeing him or advising him is in vain. This morning you said a man had cured him by writing upon a tin plate, and, to try if he was well, they crammed him with raw beef. I do not think the letters that he swallowed will do him any harm, neither will they do him any good, but I shall not be surprised if the raw beef kills him, and his daughter Welleta Selassé, too, before I see him to-morrow."

On the morrow Petros was really ill and feverish, from cold, fatigue, and fright. Aylo and I went to Koscam, and on the

way I astonished him by shooting birds from horseback, and other feats. We were just entering the palace door when we saw a procession of monks, with the priests of Koscam at their head, carrying a large cross, and a picture of the Virgin Mary in a dirty gilt frame. We were informed that three great saints from Waldubba (one of whom had neither eaten nor drank for twenty years !) had come to cure Welled Hawaryat, by laying the picture and cross upon him, and that, therefore, they would not wish me to meddle in the affair. "I assure you, Ayto Aylo," said I, "I shall strictly obey you. There is no sort of reason for my meddling in this affair with such associates. If they can cure him by a miracle, I am sure it is the easiest kind of cure of any, and will not do his constitution the least harm afterwards, which is more than I will promise for medicines in general ; but, remember what I say to you, it will be a miracle indeed, if both the father and the daughter are not dead before to-morrow night."

After the procession had passed, I was admitted into the presence of the Iteghé, and, according to the custom of the country, prostrated myself on the ground. Aylo then said, "This is our gracious mistress, who always gives us her assistance and protection. You may safely say before her whatever is in your heart."

Our first discourse was about Jerusalem, the Holy Sepulchre, Calvary, the City of David, and the Mount of Olives, with the situations of which she was perfectly well acquainted. She then asked me to tell her truly whether I was not a Frank ?

"Madam," said I, "if I was a Catholic, which you mean by *Frank*, there could be no greater folly than my concealing this from you in the beginning, after the assurance that Ayto Aylo *has just now given* ; and in confirmation of the truth I am now

telling (she had a large Bible lying on the table before her, upon which I laid my hand), I declare to you, by all those truths contained in this book, that my religion is more different from the Catholic than yours is ; that there has been more blood shed between the Catholics and us on account of the difference of religion, than ever was between you and the Catholics in this country ; even at this day, when men are become wiser and cooler in many parts of the world, it would be fully as safe for a Jesuit to preach in the market-place of Gondar, as for any priest of my religion to present himself as a teacher in the most civilized of Frank or Catholic countries."

"How is it, then," said she, "that you do not believe in miracles?"

"I see, madam," said I, "that Ayto Aylo has informed you of a few words that some time ago dropped from me. I do certainly believe the miracles of Christ and his Apostles, otherwise I am no Christian ; but I do not believe these miracles of latter times, wrought upon trifling occasions, like sports and jugglers' tricks."

"And yet," replied she, "our books are full of them."

"I know they are," said I, "and so are those of the Catholics ; but I never can believe that a saint converted the devil, who lived for forty years after a holy life as a monk ; nor the story of another saint, who, being sick and hungry, caused a brace of partridges, ready roasted, to fly upon his plate, that he might eat them."

"He has been reading the Synaxar," said Ayto Aylo.

"I believe so," said the Iteghé, smiling ; "but is there any harm in believing too much ? and is there not great danger in believing too little ?"

"Certainly," continued I; "but all I meant to say to Ayto Aylo was, that I did not believe laying a picture upon Welled Hawaryat would recover him when delirious in a fever."

"There is nothing impossible with God," replied she.

I made a bow of assent, wishing heartily the conversation might end there.

I returned to the Moors' town, leaving Aylo with the queen. In the afternoon I heard that Welleta Selassé was dead; and at night died her father, Welled Hawaryat. The contagion from Masuah and Adowa had spread itself all over Gondar. Ayabdar, the remaining daughter of Welled Hawaryat, by Ozoro Altash, was now sick; and a violent fever had fallen upon Koscam. The next morning Aylo came to me, and told me that all faith in the saint who had not eaten or drank for twenty years was perfectly abandoned since Welled Hawaryat's death; and that it was the desire of the queen and Ozoro Esther that I should transport myself to Koscam, to the Iteghé's palace, to have them and their families under my care. After some hesitation, I consented.

Before I entered upon my charge, I desired Petros (now recovered), Aylo, Abba Christophorus, a Greek priest, who acted as physician before I came to Gondar, and Aramaxikos, priest of Koscam, and favourite of the Iteghé, to meet with me. I stated to them the disagreeable task now imposed upon me—a stranger without acquaintance or protection, imperfectly acquainted with the language, and having no authority among them. I professed my willingness to do my utmost; but insisted that one condition should be granted me—namely, that no directions as to regimen or management, even of the most trifling kind, should be suffered *by permission* and superintendence. They all assented

to this ; and Aramaxikos declared those excommunicated that broke this promise, adding that I should have the assistance of his prayers and that of his monks. Aylo whispered to me, "You need have no objection to this saint ; I assure you he eats and drinks very heartily, as I shall show you when once these troubles are over."

I set the servants all to work. I opened the doors and windows of all the apartments, fumigating them with incense and myrrh, and washing them with warm water and vinegar, according to the rules given me at Aleppo by my worthy and skilful friend, Dr. Russel.

Ayabdar and the son of Mariam Barea were both taken ill at the same time, and happily recovered, though they were both very much marked. Ayto Confu, the favourite son of Ozoro Esther, a boy of great promise, caught the infection ; and, last of all, the infant child of Michael, the child of his old age, took the disease, and though the weakest, recovered best. I tell these things, for brevity's sake, all together, to satisfy the reader about the reason of the remarkable attention and favour shown to me afterwards, upon so short an acquaintance.

The anxiety of Ozoro Esther about her son Confu was excessive ; and many promises of Michael's favour, of riches, greatness, and protection, followed every instance of my care and attention towards him. The attention I showed to this young man was greatly owing to a prepossession in his favour, which I took up at the first sight of him. Policy as well as charity alike influenced me in the care of my other patients ; but an attachment, with which Providence seemed to have inspired me for my own preservation, had the greatest share in my care for Ayto Confu.

My patients, being all likely to do well, were removed to a large house which stood within the boundaries of Koscam, while the rooms underwent another lustration and fumigation, after which they returned. I got, as my fee, a neat and convenient house, within the precincts of the palace, having, however, a separate entrance of its own. Since coming to the palace I had received a letter from Ras Michael, commanding me, in somewhat peremptory terms, to stay there ; and I thought it better to remain till I received further orders. My leisure time I employed in putting my instruments in order.

One day, when I was taking my leave of the queen, after one of my usual interviews, Abba Salama entered the apartment. This man at that time filled the post of Acab Saat, or guardian of the fire—the third dignity in the church. He was exceedingly rich and influential, and lived a very licentious life, notwithstanding his vows of poverty and chastity. He was of a pleasing countenance, short in stature, and of a very fair complexion ; indifferent, or rather averse to wine, but a monstrous glutton and epicure ; and a mortal enemy to all white people, whom he called Franks.

Seeing me withdrawing, Abba Salama called out, with an air of authority, “Come back !” and beckoned me with his hand. I stood still in the place where I was, ready to receive the Iteghé’s orders. She said, “Come back, and speak to Abba Salama.”

I then advanced a few paces forward, and said, looking to the Iteghé, “What has Abba Salama to say to me ?”

“Is he a priest?—is he a priest?” asked Abba Salama, directing his discourse to the queen.

*He Iteghé answered very gravely, “Every good man is a*

priest to himself ; in that sense, and no other, Yagoube is a priest."

"Will you answer a question that I will ask you?" says he to me, in a very pert tone of voice.

"I do not know but I may, if it is a discreet one," answered I in Tigré.

"Why don't you speak Amharic?" asked he, with some impatience.

"Because I cannot speak it well," replied I. "Why do not you, on the other hand, speak Tigré to me? It is the language the holy Scriptures are written in ; and you, a priest, should understand it."

"That is Geez," said he ; "I understand it, but I don't speak it."

"Then," said I, "Ayto Heikel shall interpret for us ; he understands all languages."

"Ask him, Heikel," said Abba Salama, "how many natures there are in Christ."

"I thought," replied I, when the question was repeated to me, "that the question to be put was something relating to my country, travels, or profession in which I possibly could instruct him ; and not belonging to his, in which he should instruct me. I am a physician in the town, a horseman and soldier in the field. Physic is my study in the one, and managing my horse and arms in the other. This I was bred to ; as for disputes and matters of religion, they are the province of priests and schoolmen. I profess myself much more ignorant in these than I ought to be ; therefore, when I have doubts, I propose them to some holy man like you, Abba Salama (he bowed for the first time) whose profession these things are. He gives me a rule, and I implicitly follow it."



"Truth! truth!" says he; "by St. Michael, prince of angels, that is right; it is answered well; by St. George, he is a clever fellow. They told me he was a Jesuit. Will you come to see me? You need not be afraid when you come to *me*."

"I trust," replied I, "I shall do no ill; and, in that case, I shall have no reason to fear." Upon this I withdrew.

On the 8th of March I met Ras Michael at Azazo. He was dressed in a coarse dirty cloth, wrapped about him like a blanket, with something like a table-cloth folded about his head. He was lean, old, sore-eyed, and apparently much fatigued, and sat in a stooping posture on a favourite mule, which carried him speedily without shaking him. A Greek priest told him who I was, and that I had come to meet him, whereupon the soldiers made way, and I came up and kissed his hand. Michael looked me broad in the face for a second, repeated the ordinary salutation in Tigré, and pointed to a place where I was to sit down, in a kind of temporary tent, where he alighted. Here there was so much noise and confusion, with a thousand different people pressing round the Ras to ask his attention to their requests and complaints, that he took scarcely any notice of me. The first horrid spectacle which Michael exhibited there was the pulling out of the eyes of twelve of the chiefs of the Galla, whom he had taken prisoners. After this barbarous punishment had been inflicted, the unfortunate sufferers were turned out into the fields, to be devoured by the hyenas. Two of these unhappy creatures I took under my care; they both recovered, and from them I learned many particulars of their country and manners.

Next day the army, which, to the number of 30,000, was encamped upon the Kahha, marched into Gondar in triumph, *the Ras heading the troops of Tigré*. He was bareheaded; over

his shoulders and down his back hung a pallium or cloak of black velvet, with a silver fringe. A boy at his right stirrup held a silver wand of about five feet and a half long. Behind him all the soldiers who had slain an enemy and taken the spoils from them, had their lances and firelocks ornamented with small shreds of scarlet cloth, one piece for every man he had slain.

Remarkable among this multitude was Hagos, door-keeper of the Ras. This man, always well armed and well mounted, had followed the wars of the Ras from his infancy, and had been so fortunate in this kind of single combat, that his whole lance and javelin, horse and person, were covered over with the shreds of scarlet cloth. At the last battle he was said to have slain eleven men with his own hand—most of them, doubtless, wretched, weary, naked fugitives, mounted upon tired horses, or flying upon foot.

Behind came Gusho, governor of Amhara, and Powussen, lately made governor of Begemder for his behaviour at the battle. One thing remarkable in this cavalcade was the head-dress of the governors of provinces. A large broad fillet was bound upon their forehead, and tied behind their head. In the middle of this was a horn, or conical piece of silver, gilt, about four inches long, much in the shape of an extinguisher. It is called *kirn*, or horn, and is only worn in reviews or parades after victory.\*

Next to the governors came the king, with a fillet of white muslin, about three inches broad, binding his forehead, and hanging down about two feet on his back. About him were the great officers of state, such of the young nobility as were without command; and after these the household troops.

\* This is probably taken from the Hebrews, like most of the other usages of the Abyssinians. See Psalms lxxxix. 17, 24; xcii. 10; Micah iv. 13, &c.

Then followed the Kanitz Kitsera, or executioner of the camp, and his attendants ; and last of all came a man bearing upon a pole the skin of Woosheka, the unfortunate friend of Petros, which he hung on a tree before the king's palace, appropriated for public executions.

In the evening of the 13th of March, Negadé Ras Mahomet came to the house in Gondar, to which I had by that time returned, and informed me that at Ayto Aylo's proposal, the Ras had agreed to make me Palambaras, or master of the horse to the king. I told Mahomet that, far from being any kindness to me, this would make me the most unhappy of all creatures ; that my extreme desire was to see the country, and its different natural productions ; to converse with the people as a stranger, but to be nobody's master nor servant ; to see their books ; and, above all, to visit the sources of the Nile ; to live as privately in my own house, and have as much time to myself as possible ; and what I was most anxious about at present was to know when it would be convenient to admit me to see the Ras, and deliver my letters as a stranger.

Mahomet went away, and returned, bringing Mahomet Gibberti, who told me that, besides the letter I carried to Ras Michael from Metical Aga, he had been charged with a particular one, out of the ordinary form, dictated by the English at Jidda, who all, and particularly my friends Captain Thornhill and Captain Thomas Price, had agreed to make a point with Metical Aga, who was devoted to them for his own interest, that his utmost exertions should be employed to secure for me the assistance and protection of Ras Michael.

This letter informed Michael of the power and riches of our *us*, and that they were absolute masters of the trade on the

Red Sea, and strictly connected with the Sherriffe of Mecca, and in a very particular manner with Metical Aga himself ; that any accident happening to me would be an infamy and disgrace to him, and worse than death itself, because, knowing Michael's power, and relying on his friendship, he had become surety for my safety ; that I was a man of consideration in my own country, servant to the king of it ; that all my desire was to examine springs and rivers, trees and flowers, and the stars in the heavens, from which I drew knowledge very useful to preserve man's health and life ; that I was no merchant, and had no dealings whatever in any sort of mercantile matters ; and that I had no need of any man's money, as he had ordered Mahomet Gibberti to supply me with any sum that I might require.

Upon reading this letter Michael exclaimed, "Metical Aga does not know the situation of this country. Safety ! where is that to be found ? I am obliged to fight for my own life every day. Will Metical call this safety ? Who knows at this moment if the king is in safety, or how long I shall be so ? All I can do is to keep him with me. If I lose my own life and the king's, Metical Aga can never think it was in my power to preserve that of this stranger."

"No, no," said Ayto Aylo, who was then present, "you don't know the man : he is a devil on horseback ; he rides better and shoots better than any man that ever came into Abyssinia ; lose no time, put him about the king, and there is no fear of him. He is very sober and religious ; he will do the king good."

It was finally agreed that the letters the Greeks had received should be read to the king, and that I should be introduced immediately to him and the Ras. It was about the 14th that these letters were to be read ; five in the evening was fixed as

way I astonished him by shooting birds from horseback, and other feats. We were just entering the palace door when we saw a procession of monks, with the priests of Koscam at their head, carrying a large cross, and a picture of the Virgin Mary in a dirty gilt frame. We were informed that three great saints from Waldubba (one of whom had neither eaten nor drank for twenty years!) had come to cure Welled Hawaryat, by laying the picture and cross upon him, and that, therefore, they would not wish me to meddle in the affair. "I assure you, Ayto Aylo," said I, "I shall strictly obey you. There is no sort of reason for my meddling in this affair with such associates. If they can cure him by a miracle, I am sure it is the easiest kind of cure of any, and will not do his constitution the least harm afterwards, which is more than I will promise for medicines in general; but, remember what I say to you, it will be a miracle indeed, if both the father and the daughter are not dead before to-morrow night."

After the procession had passed, I was admitted into the presence of the Iteghé, and, according to the custom of the country, prostrated myself on the ground. Aylo then said, "This is our gracious mistress, who always gives us her assistance and protection. You may safely say before her whatever is in your heart."

Our first discourse was about Jerusalem, the Holy Sepulchre, Calvary, the City of David, and the Mount of Olives, with the situations of which she was perfectly well acquainted. She then asked me to tell her truly whether I was not a Frank?

"Madam," said I, "if I was a Catholic, which you mean by *Frank*, there could be no greater folly than my concealing this from you in the beginning, after the assurance that Ayto Aylo *has just now given*; and in confirmation of the truth I am now

telling (she had a large Bible lying on the table before her, upon which I laid my hand), I declare to you, by all those truths contained in this book, that my religion is more different from the Catholic than yours is ; that there has been more blood shed between the Catholics and us on account of the difference of religion, than ever was between you and the Catholics in this country ; even at this day, when men are become wiser and cooler in many parts of the world, it would be fully as safe for a Jesuit to preach in the market-place of Gondar, as for any priest of my religion to present himself as a teacher in the most civilized of Frank or Catholic countries."

"How is it, then," said she, "that you do not believe in miracles?"

"I see, madam," said I, "that Ayto Aylo has informed you of a few words that some time ago dropped from me. I do certainly believe the miracles of Christ and his Apostles, otherwise I am no Christian ; but I do not believe these miracles of latter times, wrought upon trifling occasions, like sports and jugglers' tricks."

"And yet," replied she, "our books are full of them."

"I know they are," said I, "and so are those of the Catholics ; but I never can believe that a saint converted the devil, who lived for forty years after a holy life as a monk ; nor the story of another saint, who, being sick and hungry, caused a brace of partridges, ready roasted, to fly upon his plate, that he might eat them."

"He has been reading the Synaxar," said Ayto Aylo.

"I believe so," said the Iteghé, smiling ; "but is there any harm in believing too much ? and is there not great danger in believing too little?"

"Certainly," continued I ; "but all I meant to say to Ayto Aylo was, that I did not believe laying a picture upon Welled Hawaryat would recover him when delirious in a fever."

"There is nothing impossible with God," replied she.

I made a bow of assent, wishing heartily the conversation might end there.

I returned to the Moors' town, leaving Aylo with the queen. In the afternoon I heard that Welleta Selassé was dead ; and at night died her father, Welled Hawaryat. The contagion from Masuah and Adowa had spread itself all over Gondar. Ayabdar, the remaining daughter of Welled Hawaryat, by Ozoro Altash, was now sick ; and a violent fever had fallen upon Koscam. The next morning Aylo came to me, and told me that all faith in the saint who had not eaten or drank for twenty years was perfectly abandoned since Welled Hawaryat's death ; and that it was the desire of the queen and Ozoro Esther that I should transport myself to Koscam, to the Iteghé's palace, to have them and their families under my care. After some hesitation, I consented.

Before I entered upon my charge, I desired Petros (now recovered), Aylo, Abba Christophorus, a Greek priest, who acted as physician before I came to Gondar, and Aramaxikos, priest of Koscam, and favourite of the Iteghé, to meet with me. I stated to them the disagreeable task now imposed upon me—a stranger without acquaintance or protection, imperfectly acquainted with the language, and having no authority among them. I professed my willingness to do my utmost ; but insisted that one condition should be granted me—namely, that no directions as to regimen or management, even of the most trifling kind, should be suffered *without my permission* and superintendence. They all assented

to this ; and Aramaxikos declared those excommunicated that broke this promise, adding that I should have the assistance of his prayers and that of his monks. Aylo whispered to me, "You need have no objection to this saint ; I assure you he eats and drinks very heartily, as I shall show you when once these troubles are over."

I set the servants all to work. I opened the doors and windows of all the apartments, fumigating them with incense and myrrh, and washing them with warm water and vinegar, according to the rules given me at Aleppo by my worthy and skilful friend, Dr. Russel.

Ayabdar and the son of Mariam Barea were both taken ill at the same time, and happily recovered, though they were both very much marked. Ayto Confu, the favourite son of Ozoro Esther, a boy of great promise, caught the infection ; and, last of all, the infant child of Michael, the child of his old age, took the disease, and though the weakest, recovered best. I tell these things, for brevity's sake, all together, to satisfy the reader about the reason of the remarkable attention and favour shown to me afterwards, upon so short an acquaintance.

The anxiety of Ozoro Esther about her son Confu was excessive ; and many promises of Michael's favour, of riches, greatness, and protection, followed every instance of my care and attention towards him. The attention I showed to this young man was greatly owing to a prepossession in his favour, which I took up at the first sight of him. Policy as well as charity alike influenced me in the care of my other patients ; but an attachment, with which Providence seemed to have inspired me for my own preservation, had the greatest share in my care for Ayto Confu.



and, taking my hand, placed me immediately above him ; when, seeing that I had no knife in my girdle, he pulled out his own, and gave it to me. Upon being placed, I again kissed the ground.

The usual questions now began, about Jerusalem and the holy places—where my country was (which it was impossible to describe, as they knew the situation of no country but their own)—why I came so far—whether the moon and the stars were the same in my country as in theirs ; and a great many such idle and tiresome questions. I had several times offered to take my present from the man that held it, that I might offer it to his majesty, and go away ; but the king always made a sign to defer it, till, tired to death with standing, I leaned against the wall. Aylo was fast asleep, and Heikel and the Greeks were cursing their master in their hearts, for spoiling the good supper that Anthulé his treasurer had prepared for us. At last Heikel, taking courage, came forward to the king, pretending a message from the queen, and whispered something in his ear—probably that the Ras would take it ill that he kept me waiting thus. The king laughed, said he thought we had supped, and dismissed us.

We all went to Anthulé's house to supper, in very bad temper, as is usual with hungry men in such circumstances. We brought with us from the palace three of my brother Baalomaals, and one who had stood to make up the number, though he was not in office. His name was Guebra Mascal ; he was a sister's son of the Ras, and commanded one-third of the troops of Tigré which carried fire-arms—that is, about 2000 men. He was reputed one of the best officers that the Ras had, and was *about thirty years* of age, short, square, and well made, but of a

very unpromising countenance. He had the highest opinion of the merits of his past services ; and did not scruple to say that it was to his superior knowledge of fire-arms that Ras Michael owed all his victories.

This man supped with us that night, and thence began one of the most serious affairs I ever had in Abyssinia. Guebra Mascal, as usual, vaunted incessantly of his skill in fire-arms. Petros said, laughing, to him, "You have a genius for shooting, but you have had no opportunity to learn. Now Yagoube is come, he will teach you something worth talking of."

They had all drank abundantly, and Guebra Mascal had uttered words that I thought were in contempt of me. "Guebra Mascal," replied I, peevishly enough, "I should suspect from your discourse you neither knew men nor guns. Every gun of mine in the hands of my servants will kill twice as far as yours ; as for my own, it is not worth my while to put a ball in it ; the end of a candle in my gun will do more execution than an iron-ball in the best of yours !"

He said I was a Frank and a liar, and gave me a kick with his foot. Blind with rage, I seized him by the throat, and threw him on the ground. He drew his knife as he was falling, and gave me a trifling wound on the crown of the head. I wrested the knife from him, and struck him violently in the face with the handle, inflicting a scar distinguishable even among the deep marks of the small-pox. This affair instantly overcame the effects of wine. It is death to lift a hand within the precincts of the palace, and Anthulé's house came within its bounds ; therefore, my friends began to offer me various counsels as to what I should do in the emergency. I determined to return to my own house, after washing the blood from my face. I reached

home without accident, and went to bed. Guebra Mascal fled to the house of Kefla Yasous, his relative ; but the first news I got in the morning was that he was in irons at the Ras's house.

After some consultation with Ayto Aylo, I proceeded to the house of the Ras, where I found Ozoro Esther in a state of violent anger and agitation. She had heard that I was wounded dangerously, and was much relieved when I stated that my hurt was very trifling. I prevailed upon the Ras to pardon Guebra Mascal, whose punishment would have been fatal to myself, as I would be regarded by his countrymen as the cause of his death.

I attended in my place at the palace after breakfast, and received great marks of favour from the king, who had heard the whole circumstances of the affair, and looked grave and sorrowful, as if mortified by what had happened. For my own part, I was never so dejected in my life. I more than twenty times resolved to return by Tigré. To this I was more inclined by the loss of Luigi Balugani, the young man who accompanied me through Barbary, and assisted me in the drawings of architecture which I made for the king there ; a dysentery, which had attacked him in Arabia Felix, put an end to his life at Gondar. This despondency impaired my health, and I was upon the point of becoming seriously ill. My melancholy, however, was in some degree dissipated by the festivities which took place at Gondar at this time, in consequence of the marriage of Ozoro Ayabdar, the grand-daughter of Michael, to Powussen, the governor of Begemder. The king gave her extensive districts of land in that province, and Ras Michael a large portion of gold, muskets, cattle, and horses. All who wished to be well looked *on by either party* brought something considerable as a present.

The Ras, Ozoro Esther, and Ozoro Altash entertained all Gondar. Large numbers of cattle were slaughtered every day, and the town looked like one great market—the common people in every street appearing loaded with pieces of raw beef, while drink was distributed with like profusion. The Ras insisted on my dining with him every day, when he was sure to give me a headache with the quantity of mead or hydromel which he forced me to swallow. After dinner we slipped away to parties of ladies, where anarchy prevailed as completely as at the house of the Ras. All the married women ate, drank, and smoked like the men; and it is impossible to convey to the reader, in terms of common decency, any idea of this bacchanalian scene.

Although the king's favour, the protection of the Ras, and my obliging behaviour to everybody, made me as popular as I could wish at Gondar and among the Tigrans, yet it was easy to perceive that the cause of my quarrel with Guebra Mascal was not yet forgotten.

One day, when I was standing by the king in the palace, he asked, in the course of conversation, whether I, too, was not drunk, in the quarrel with Guebra Mascal, before we came to blows; and, on my saying that I was perfectly sober, he asked, with a degree of keenness, "Did you, then, soberly say to Guebra Mascal that an end of a tallow candle in a gun in your hand would do more execution than an iron bullet in his?"

"Certainly, sir," replied I; "I did so."

"And why did you say this?" said the king, dryly enough. "You will not persuade me that, with a tallow candle, you can kill a man or a horse."

"Pardon me, sir," said I, bowing very respectfully, "I will attempt to persuade you of nothing but what you please to be

convinced of. What I say to you, sir, has always been as scrupulously true as if I had been speaking to the king, my native sovereign and master. Whether I can kill a man with a candle or not, is an experiment that should not be made. Tell me, however, what I shall do before you that you may deem an equivalent. Will piercing the table upon which your dinner is served (it was of sycamore, about three-quarters of an inch thick), at the length of this room, be deemed a sufficient proof of what I advanced?"

"Ah, Yagoube, Yagoube!" said the king, "take care what you say. That is, indeed, more than Guebra Mascal will do at that distance; but take care—though these people are all liars, they expect the truth from *you*."

"I am sure," said Ayto Engedan, "if Yagoube says he can do it, he will do it—but how, I don't know. Can you shoot through my shield with a tallow candle?"

"To you, Ayto Engedan," said I, "I can speak freely. I could shoot through your shield, though it was the strongest in the army, and kill the strongest man in the army that held it before him. When will you see this tried?"

"Why, now," said the king.

"The sooner the better," replied I; "I would not wish to remain for a moment longer under so disagreeable an imputation as that of lying, an infamous one in *my* country, whatever it may be in this. Let me send for my gun; the king will look out at the window."

The king appeared to be very anxious, and, I saw plainly, incredulous. The gun was brought; Engedan's shield was produced, which was of a strong buffalo hide. I said to him, "*This is a weak one; give me a stronger.*" He shook his head,

and said, "Ah, Yagoube, you'll find it strong enough—Engedan's shield is known to be no toy." Tecla Mariam had also brought such a shield, and the Billetana Gueta Tecla another, both excellent of their kind. I loaded the gun before them, first with powder, then upon it slid down the half of what we call a farthing candle, and, having beat off the handles of the three shields, I put them close in contact with each other, and set them against a post.

"Now, Engedan," said I, "when you please, say 'Fire!' but remember you have taken leave of your good shield for ever."

The word was given, and the gun fired. It struck the three shields neither in the most difficult nor the easiest part for perforation. The candle went through the three shields with such violence that it dashed itself into a thousand pieces against a stone wall behind. I turned to Engedan, saying very slowly, gravely, and without exultation, or triumph, on the contrary, with absolute indifference, "Did I not tell you that your shield was naught?" A great shout of applause followed, from about a thousand people who were gathered together. The three shields were carried to the king, who exclaimed, in great transport, "I did not believe it before I saw it, and I can scarce believe it now I have seen it!"

"Ayto Engedan," said I, "we must have a touch at that table. It was said that the piercing of it was more than Guebra Mascal could do. We have one-half of the candle left still; it is the thinnest and weakest half, and I shall put the wick foremost."

The table being now properly placed, to Engedan's utmost astonishment, the candle, with the wick foremost, went through it, as it had gone through the three shields. "By St. Michael!

Yagoube," said he, "hereafter say to me that you can raise my father Eshté from his grave, and I will believe you." Some priests who were present, thinking it below their dignity to be surprised at anything, said it was done by *mucktoub*, or magic, an opinion which was embraced by the spectators, with whom the wonder forthwith ceased. But it was not so with the king: it made the most favourable and lasting impression on his mind; nor did I ever afterwards see in his countenance any marks of doubt or diffidence, but always, on the contrary, the most decisive proofs of friendship, confidence, and attention, and the most implicit belief of everything I advanced upon any subject from my own knowledge.

The experiment was twice afterwards tried in presence of Ras Michael. He would not risk his good shields, but produced the table, saying, "Engedan and those foolish boys were rightly served. They thought Yagoube was a liar like themselves, and they lost their shields; but I believed him, and gave him my table from curiosity only, and so I saved mine."

## CHAPTER XII.

*I am appointed Governor of Ras el Feel—Success of Fasil—The King resolves to march against him—The Iteghé moralizes— I accompany the royal army—Escape of Welleta Israel— Passage of the Nile—I visit the great Cataract of the Nile— Desolation produced by Ras Michael's army—A panic—A ridiculous accident—We march back again—A skirmish— Peace with Fasil—The King and Michael retire to Tigré—The rebels enter Gondar—Things take another turn.*

I SOON received an instance of kindness from Ayto Confu, which gave me great pleasure. On the west of Abyssinia, on the frontiers of Sennaar, is a hot, unwholesome strip of country, inhabited only by Mahometans, and divided into several districts, known by the general name of Mazaga. Ayto Confu possessed many districts on this frontier, the governor of which he was going to displace on account of cowardice and incapacity. I warned Ozoro Esther that the journey was one which would, in all probability, prove fatal to her son; whereupon she became alarmed, and the Ras positively forbade him to undertake it. I was anxious to have my faithful Moor, Yasine, appointed deputy-governor of this province, and had taken some steps to accomplish this, when, to my great surprise, I learned that I was myself appointed governor, with full liberty to name my own deputy. "It is no great affair," said Tecla Mariam, who



gave me the information of my preferment, "and I hope you will never see it. It is a hot, unwholesome country, full of Mahometans ; but its gold is as good as any Christian gold whatever. I wish with all my heart that it had been Begemder ; but there is a good time coming."

I went to Ayto Confu, to kiss his hand as my superior, but this he would by no means suffer me to do. A great dinner was provided for us by the Iteghé ; and Yasine being sent for, was appointed deputy-governor, and ordered to proceed to Ras el Feel immediately.

I now, for the first time since my arrival in Abyssinia, abandoned myself to joy. I had secured for myself, as I thought, the means of returning by Sennaar, as I was determined never again to trust myself in the hands of that bloody assassin, the Naybe of Masuah. My constitution, however, was too much weakened to bear any excesses ; and the following day I was attacked with a slow fever, which confined me to the house for some time.

Shortly after this, the news reached Gondar that Kasmati Boro, whom the Ras had left governor at Damot, had been defeated by the rebel Fasil, who had taken possession of Buré, the usual place of his residence. On my expressing my sorrow at this, as likely to hinder me from reaching the source of the Nile—"You are mistaken," said Kefla Yasous to me, "it is the best thing that can happen to you. Why you desire to see those places, I do not know ; but this I am sure of, you will not arrive there with any degree of safety while Fasil commands. He is as perfect a Galla as ever forded the Nile ; he has neither word, nor oath, nor faith, that can bind him ; he does mischief for *mischief's sake*, and then laughs at it. In November next all

Abyssinia will march against him, and he will not stay to meet us ; but we shall not leave his country till we have eaten it bare ; and then, at your ease, you will see everything, defend yourself by your own force, and be beholden to nobody. And remember what I say—Peace with Fasil there will never be, for he does not desire it ; nor, till you see his head upon a pole, or Michael's army encamped at Buré, will you, if you are wise, ever attempt to pass Maitsha."

On the receipt of the news a council was immediately held, at which it was resolved that, though the rainy season was at hand, the king's troops should take the field immediately. Guscho and Powussen, two of the governors of provinces, who were at Gondar at the time, were ordered to return to their respective districts and raise reinforcements for the army. After swearing to Ras Michael that they would bring him Fasil's head, they proceeded to Begemder, where the first thing they did was to enter into a formidable conspiracy against Michael. Their scheme, which had been long meditated, was to make a league with Fasil, and, by a carefully-planned onset with their three armies, to make sure that the Ras should lose his liberty or his life.

All this time I had been declining in health. The king and Ras Michael had sufficiently provided tents and conveniences for me ; but as I wanted a tent through the roof of which I could take observations with my quadrant, without being annoyed by curious visitors, I obtained leave from the king to go to Emfras, a town twenty miles south from Gondar, where I would be able to obtain what I wanted. Guscho had a house there, and a pleasant garden, of which he very willingly gave me the use, with this advice, however, which I did not at the time understand, rather to go on to Amhara with him, for I would

there sooner recover my health, and enjoy more quiet than with the king or Ras Michael.

Before leaving Gondar, I went to Koscam to take my leave of the Iteghé. That excellent princess endeavoured much to dissuade me from leaving Gondar. She treated my project of going to the source of the Nile as a fantastical folly, unworthy of any man of sense or understanding. "See, see," says she, "how every day of our life furnishes us with proofs of the perverseness and contradiction of human nature ! You are come from Jerusalem, through vile Turkish governments, and hot, unwholesome climates, to see a river and a bog, no part of which you can carry away were it ever so valuable, and of which you have, in your own country, a thousand, larger, better, and cleaner ; and you take it ill when I discourage you from the pursuit of this fancy, in which you are likely to perish, without your friends at home ever hearing when or where the accident happened ; while I, on the other hand, the mother of kings, who have sat upon the throne of this country more than thirty years, have for my only wish, night and day, that, after giving up everything in the world, I could be conveyed to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, and beg alms for my subsistence all my life after, if I could only be buried in the street within sight of the gate of that temple where our blessed Saviour once lay !"

I confess I was very much affected by the queen's words and manner ; but the prodigious bustle and preparation which I found being daily made in Gondar, and the assurances everybody gave me that, safe in the middle of a victorious army, I should see at my leisure that famous spot, induced me to *persevere*. Accordingly, on the 4th of April 1770, I set out for

the town of Emfras, where I arrived the next day. Emfras is a town of about three hundred houses, situated on a steep hill on the east side of the lake of Tzana, which is the largest expanse of water in Abyssinia. The lake is thirty-five miles broad and fifty long, and contains numerous inhabited islands.

On the 13th of May the king's army reached Emfras, on its march against Fasil. Immediately upon its appearance, every one hid what was valuable in his house, or fled to the mountains with it. Emfras in a few hours was quite deserted ; for, strict and just as Ras Michael was in time of peace, he was most licentious and cruel the moment he took the field, especially if the country which he entered had ever shown the least enmity to him.

On the 14th, at daybreak, I repaired to the royal camp. Early as it was, the king was then in council ; but, though my place in the household gave me free access to wherever the king was, I thought it better to go first to the tent of Ozoro Esther. As soon as I appeared, she cried out, "There is Yagoube ! there is the man I wanted !" The tent was cleared of all but her women, and she began to speak to me of several complaints which, she thought, before the end of the campaign, would carry her to her grave. It was easy to see they were of the slightest kind, though it would not have been agreeable to have told her so, for she loved to be thought ill, to be attended and flattered. She was, however, so amiable, and so elegant in her manners, that her physician might have been tempted to wish never to see her well.

After giving her my advice, and directing her women how to administer what I was to send her, the doors of the tent were thrown open and an abundant breakfast was served in wooden

platters on the carpet. Our kind landlady, who was reclining on a sofa, pressed us to make the most of the good cheer before us, as the kettle drums would soon give the signal for striking the tents. This was a reason that influenced me quite the other way ; so I made my apology to Ozoro Esther, and went to the king's tent, where I was kindly received, though the young prince George, who was present, ventured to say (what was perhaps true) that Ozoro Esther had given me too much wine !

The king remained the two following days, encamped upon the Nile. Several things occurred while he was here, that might have excited suspicion in his mind. Aylo, governor of Gojam, had been summoned to assist Ras Michael, and his mother, Ozoro Welleta Israel, then at Gondar, had promised he should not fail. This lady was the younger sister of Ozoro Esther, as beautiful in person, but less amiable and accomplished in mind. She had refused the old Ras, who asked her in marriage before he was called from Tigré to Gondar, and a mortal hatred on his part had been the consequence. It was reported that he had been heard to say that he would order the eyes of Welleta Israel to be pulled out, if Aylo, her son, did not join him. It must have been a man such as Ras Michael that could form such a resolution ; for Welleta Israel's eyes were most captivating.

She was then in the camp with her sister. In the evening of the 15th, a small tent had appeared on the opposite side of the Nile, which was here broad, deep, and rapid ; and, on the morning of the 16th, both Welleta Israel and the tent were missing. She had made her escape in the dead of night, accompanied by her nephew, Ayto Engedan. Everybody rejoiced that so bold an attempt had been attended with the success it merited ; though *it was necessary* to conceal this satisfaction from Michael.



Cizor Esther, who was reclining on a sofa, pressed us to make the most of the good cheer before us, as the kettle-drums would soon give the signal for striking the tents — P. 206.



The king's passage of the Nile, which was on the 18th, was the signal for me to join him. I was accompanied by Strates, a Greek, and numerous other attendants. We met with several unimportant adventures during the first days of our march. On reaching the village of Dara, I met my friend Negadé Ras Mahomet, who told me, under the seal of secrecy, that Ras Michael had halted two days at Derdera; that, upon a message he had received from Begemder, he had broken out into a violent passion against Gusho and Powussen, calling them liars and traitors in the openest manner; that a council had been held at Derdera, in presence of the king, where it was in deliberation whether the army should not turn aside into Begemder, to force that province to join them, but that it was resolved, for the sake of the Agows, to send Powussen a last summons; and that, in the meanwhile, they should march rapidly forward to meet Fasil and give him battle, and then return and reduce to proper subordination both Begemder and Amhara.

This was the very worst news I could possibly receive, according to the resolution I had then taken, which was, to visit the great cataract of the Nile. I was within about fourteen miles of it, and probably I should never again be so near, were it even always accessible; and I could not bear the thought of passing without seeing it. On my asking Mahomet's advice, how to manage this excursion, he said, with a grave air, "Unless you had told me you were resolved, I would in the first place have advised you not to think of such an undertaking. These are unsettled times; all the country is bushy, wild, and uninhabited; and though Mahomet, the Shum, my friend and relation, is a good man, there are now many strangers and wild people at Alata, whom Mahomet has brought to his assistance since Guebra



Mehedin made an attack upon him. If anything was to befall you, what should I answer to the king and the Iteghé? It would be said, 'The Turk has betrayed him!' though, God knows, I was never capable of betraying your dog."

"Mahomet," replied I, "you need not dwell on these professions. I have lived twelve years with people of your religion, my life always in their power, and I am now in your house, in preference to being in a tent out of doors, with Netcho and his Christians. I do not ask you whether I am to go or not, for that is resolved on; and, though you are a Mahometan and I a Christian, no religion teaches a man to do evil. We both agree in this, that God, who has protected me thus far, is capable to protect me likewise at the cataract, and farther, if He has not determined otherwise for my good. I only ask you as a man who knows the country, to give me your best advice how I may satisfy my curiosity in this point, with as little danger and as much expedition as possible, leaving the rest to Heaven."

"Well," said he, "I shall do so. When daylight is come, take half a dozen of your servants; I will send you my son, and four of my servants; you will call at Alata, go down and see the cataract; but do not stay; return immediately, and *Ullah Kerim*, God is merciful!"

I was awakened next morning by Strates, who had heard all the conversation between me and Negadé Ras, and who made many wise expostulations against my going to the cataract. We were rather late, and I paid little regard to his remonstrances. After breakfast, we mounted and set off for the cataract. At Alata the Shum received me with much attention, and, though I to some extent shared the fears of Strates, with regard to the

unsettled state of the country. I had to accept of his hospitality, as our horses were fatigued with the journey.

I happened to be on a very steep part of the hill, where the ground was covered with bushes ; and one of the Shum's servants, dressed in the Arabian fashion, in a burnoose and turban, striped white and green, led my horse, for fear of his slipping, till it got into the path leading to the Shum's door. I heard the fellow exclaiming in Arabic, "Good Lord, to see you here! Good Lord, to see you here!" I asked him what he meant. He told me that he had often seen me at Jidda. "I was on board the *Lion*," he added, "when your little vessel, all covered with sail, passed with such briskness through the English ships, which all fired their cannon, and everybody said, 'There is a poor man making great haste to be assassinated among those wild people in Habesh ;' and so we all thought." He concluded, "Drink! no force! Englishman! very good!" summing up the few English words he possessed with a very common English oath, which he shouted out, as if in triumph. How shameful it is to us as a nation that these profane expressions, from their frequent repetition, should often be the first, sometimes the only, specimens of our language picked up by the nations of foreign countries!

After our horses had been fed, and we ourselves had taken some refreshments, we proceeded to the cataract. The first thing they carried us to was the bridge, which consists of one arch of about twenty-five feet in breadth, the extremities firmly based in the solid rock on both sides. The Nile here is confined between two rocks, and runs in a deep channel, with great roaring and impetuous velocity.

The cataract itself was the most magnificent sight that ever I beheld. Its height is about forty feet. The river had been

considerably increased by rains, and fell in one sheet of water, without any interval, above half an English mile in breadth, with a force and noise that was truly terrible, and which stunned and made me for a time perfectly dizzy. A thick mist covered the fall all round, and hung over the course of the stream both above and below, marking its track, though the water was not seen. The river, though swelled with rain, preserved its natural clearness, and fell, as far as I could discern, into a deep pool or basin, in the solid rock. It was a sight that ages, added to the greatest length of human life, would not deface or eradicate from my memory; it struck me with a sort of stupor, and a total oblivion of where I was, and of every other sublunary concern.

I measured the fall, and believe that, within a few feet, it was the height I have mentioned; but I confess I could at no time in my life less confidently lay claim to precision. My reflection was suspended, or subdued; and, while in sight of the fall, I think I was under a temporary aberration of mind: it seemed to me as if one element had broken loose from, and become superior to, all laws of subordination; that the fountains of the great deep were opened, and that the destruction of a world by the agency of water was once more begun!

Declining the invitation of the Shum to lodge in his house till the following day, I returned to Dara, where I stayed with my Moorish friend Mahomet. On the morning of the 22d we resumed our journey, to join the king. Our road lay up some hills, covered with trees and shrubs, utterly unknown to me, but of inexpressible beauty and extraordinary fragrance. As we rose, the hills became more bare, and less beautiful. From *the ridge* we obtained a good view of the lake of Tzana and its

islands. After making the descent on the other side to the passage of the Nile, I found the use of Mahomet's servants, three of whom, each with a lance in one hand, and holding that of his companion on the other, waded across the violent stream, sounding with their lances every step they took.

From the passage to Tsoomwa all the country was forsaken, the houses uninhabited, the grass trodden down, and the fields without cattle. Everything that had life and strength fled before the terrible Ras Michael, and his no less terrible army; a profound silence was in the fields around us, but no marks as yet of desolation. This feature, however, was not long wanting.

We had hitherto lost none of our beasts of carriage; but, after a march of two days, we began to be so impeded by streams, brooks, and quagmires, that we despaired of ever bringing one of them to join the camp. The horses and beasts of burden that carried the baggage of the army, and which had passed before us, had spoiled every ford, and we now saw dead mules lying about the fields, the houses all reduced to ruins, and smoking like so many kilns; even the grass, or wild oats, which grow very high, were burned in large plots of a hundred acres together; everything bore the marks that Ras Michael was gone before, whilst not a living creature appeared in those extensive, fertile, and once well-inhabited plains. An awful silence reigned everywhere around, interrupted only at times by thunder, now become daily, and the rolling of torrents produced by showers in the hills, which ceased with the rain, and were but the children of an hour. Amidst this universal silence that prevailed all over this scene of extensive desolation, I could not help remembering how finely Mr. Gray paints the passage of such an army, under a leader like Ras Michael—

"Confusion in his van with Flight combined,  
And Sorrow's faded form, and Solitude behind."

Since passing the Nile I found myself more than ordinarily depressed ; my spirits were sunk almost to a degree of despondency, and yet nothing had happened since that period more than was expected before. This disagreeable situation of mind continued at night while I was in bed. The rashness and imprudence with which I had engaged myself in so many dangers, without any necessity for so doing ; the little prospect of my being ever able to extricate myself out of them, or even, if I lost my life, of the account being conveyed to my friends at home ; the great and unreasonable presumption which had led me to think that after every one who had attempted this voyage had miscarried in it, I was the only person that was to succeed ; all these reflections upon my mind, when relaxed, dozing, and half oppressed with sleep, filled my imagination with what I have heard other people call *the horrors*, the most disagreeable sensation I ever was conscious of, and which I then felt for the first time. Impatient of suffering any longer, I leaped out of bed, and went to the door of the tent, where the fresh air perfectly awakened me, and restored my strength and courage. It was then four in the morning of the 25th. I called up my companions, happily buried in deep sleep, as I was desirous, if possible, to join the king that day.

We saw a number of people in the course of our journey this day, chiefly straggling soldiers, who, in parties of threes and fours, had been seeking, in all the bushes and concealed parts of the river, for the miserable natives ; and in this search many of them had been successful. They were hurrying along women, *boys, and girls*, whom, though Christians like themselves, they

were going to sell into slavery to the Turks, for a very small price.

About nine o'clock in the morning we heard a general firing, which, from its apparently coming nearer and nearer, was regarded as a sign that our army had been beaten by the enemy, and was retreating. The cause of the firing, however, soon appeared, in a multitude of deer, buffaloes, boars, and other wild beasts, which, in retiring before the royal army, had got into a position between the Nile, the Jemma, and the lake, from which they had no retreat but by the way they came. The soldiers, glad of the opportunity of obtaining animal food, fired upon these animals wherever they appeared. A flock of the largest deer met us, and, as they seemed too desperate for us to intercept them without danger, we allowed them to pass.

The firing produced a panic in the army. The troops which were at a distance, and did not know the cause of the noise and confusion, thought that it arose from an attack by the rebels under Woodage Asahel. I have no doubt that if he or Fasil had at this moment attacked Michael with 500 horse, our whole army would have fled without resistance.

I was making my way towards the king's tent, when I was met by a confidential servant of Kefla Yasous, who sent to ask me to come to him alone. I promised to do so, but first went to inquire after Strates, and another of my attendants called Sebastos, who had been sick upon the road. I soon came up with them, and was very much surprised to find them both lying extended on the ground. Strates was bleeding at a large wound in his forehead, moaning in Greek to himself, and exclaiming that he had broken his leg, which he pressed with both hands below the knee, apparently regardless of the gash in his head.

which seemed to be a very serious one. Sebastos was also lying stretched along the ground, scarcely saying anything, but sighing very deeply. Upon my asking him whether his arm was broken, he answered feebly that he was a dying man, and that his legs, arms, and ribs, were all broken to pieces. I could not for my life conceive how this calamity had happened so suddenly, for I had not been half an hour absent ; and, what seemed to me still stranger, the bystanders were bursting out into fits of laughter.

Ali Mahomet's servant, the only person who seemed in any way concerned at the accident, told me that it was all owing to Prince George, who had frightened their mules. This prince was fond of horsemanship, and rode with saddle, bridle, and stirrups, like an Arab. Though young, he was the best horseman in Abyssinia, and was very fond of the Arab exercise, as he had learned it from me. The manner in which the Arabs salute each other is this : the person inferior in rank or age presents his gun at the other, about five hundred yards' distance, charged with powder only ; he then, keeping his gun always presented, gallops up as fast as he can, lowers the muzzle of his gun, and fires just under his friend's stirrups, or the horse's belly. This they do sometimes twenty at a time, and you would often think it was impossible but that somebody should be bruised or burnt. The prince had been out at the deer all the morning, and hearing that I was arrived, and seeing the two Greeks riding on their mules, he came galloping furiously, with his gun presented, and, not seeing me, he fired a shot under the belly of Strates' mule ; then, turning like lightning to the left, he was out of sight in a moment.

*Never was compliment worse timed.* Strates had a couple

of panniers upon his mule, containing two great earthen jars of hydromel for the king ; Sebastos had also some jars and pots, and three or four dozen of drinking-glasses, likewise for the king ; a carpet covered the mules and the panniers, and on the pack-saddles between these panniers did Strates and Sebastos ride. Strates went first, and, to save trouble, the halter of Sebastos's mule was fastened to the saddle of Strates. As soon as the explosion took place, Strates' mule, not accustomed to noisy compliments of this kind, started, and threw his rider to the ground ; it then trampled upon him, began to run off, and wound the halter around Sebastos behind, who likewise fell to the ground among some stones. The mules then began kicking at each other, till they had thrown off the panniers and pack-saddles, and broken everything that was brittle in them. The mischief did not end here ; for, in struggling to get loose, they fell foul of the mule of old Azagé Tecla Haimanout, one of the king's criminal judges, a very feeble old man, and threw him upon the ground, injuring his foot so much that he could not walk without assistance for several months afterwards. As soon as I had pitched a tent for the wounded, and dressed Tecla Haimanout's foot, I went to Kefla Yasous.

The moment I entered his tent, Kefla Yasous rose up and embraced me. He said that the rebellion of Gusho and Powussen was certain ; and that the original plan of marching to crush Fasil before he could be joined by the great body of his confederates had been given up, on account of the heavy rains which had now set in, and rendered the rivers dangerous and the roads almost impassable. The army was to be kept entire for a future and more propitious day, and we were to re-cross the Nile and return to Gondar.



On the 26th of May the army marched towards the Nile, which was now in high flood with the incessant rains. The Greeks crowded around me, cursing the hour they had first entered that country. The first who crossed, after Netcho, Ras Michael's Fit-Auraris,\* and his four hundred men, was a young man, a relation of the king. He walked in with great caution to sound the way before the king, but his horse soon got beyond his depth, and he had to swim to the other side. The king followed immediately; then came the old Ras upon his mule, with several of his friends on either side of him; next were the king's household and black troops, and I with them. It is impossible to describe the confusion that followed. The gathering darkness increased our loss, though it in a great measure concealed it. Multitudes were carried away by the stream and drowned; among them Ayto Aylo and Tecla Mariam. The stern old Ras would not permit Ozoro Esther to make use of a raft, made for her and the other ladies by the Fit-Auraris, but commanded her to cross in the same manner he had himself done. This she accomplished safely, though almost dead with fright. The river abating towards midnight, the rest of the army crossed with less loss;

\* The Fit-Auraris is an officer depending immediately on the commander-in-chief, and corresponding with him directly, without receiving orders from any other person. He is always one of the bravest and most experienced men in the service, and requires to be intimately acquainted with the country through which the army has to march. He has a body of troops, which may range in number from 50 to 1000, according to circumstances. His post is always in advance of the van of the army—sometimes a day's march, sometimes four or six hours. As he passes on, he fixes a lance, with a flag upon it, in the place where the king's tent is to be fixed that night, or where he is to halt. He has couriers by whom he communicates with the army; and, *when he sees the enemy*, he advances, or falls back, according to his orders.

that portion of it which was under Kefla Yasous making the passage at another and better ford.

On the 28th an unimportant skirmish took place between the advanced companies of the two armies, which was dignified with the name of the battle of Limjour. The wary Fasil declined risking a general engagement, as he had not been joined, as he anticipated, by Gusho and Powussen. Seeing the manifest eagerness of the king's troops, and that a few minutes would lay him under the necessity of risking a battle, he withdrew his troops, leaving the Ras master of the field.

Next day the king, who was in good spirits, insisted upon entertaining at dinner Ras Michael and all the people of consideration. Just as they sat down to dinner, an accident happened that occasioned great trepidation among his servants. A black eagle was chased into the tent by some of the birds of prey that were hovering about the camp ; and this was universally accepted as an omen that the king would be dethroned by a man of inferior birth and condition. Everybody looked to Fasil ; but the event proved the application false, though the omen was true. Powussen of Begemder was as low-born as Fasil, as great a traitor, but more successful ; and, though we cannot but look on the whole as an accident, it was but too soon fulfilled.

The same evening appeared messengers of peace from Fasil, who disclosed the whole conspiracy of Gusho and Powussen, and proposed terms on which their master would return to his allegiance. The terms were agreed to : Michael promised his grand-daughter, Welleta Selassé, to Fasil in marriage ; and a proclamation was forthwith, to our great surprise, made by the

king's two nagareets—"Fasil is governor of the Agow, Maitsha, Gojam, and Damot ; prosperity to him, and long may he live a faithful servant to the king our master !"

On the 30th of May we arrived at Gondar. I had little reason to be pleased with the result of this expedition : I had been disappointed in my views of reaching the fountains of the Nile ; and all that I had gained by the journey was a violent ague. I seemed now farther than ever from succeeding in my great project. The king had heard that Gusho and Powussen, with all the troops of Belessen and Lasta, were ready to fall upon him in Gondar as soon as the rains should have so swelled the Tacazzé that his army could not retire into Tigré ; and it was now thought that the proclamation in favour of Fasil would hasten the movements of the rebels.

As I had never despaired, one way or another, of reaching the fountains of the Nile, so I never neglected to improve every means that held out to me the least probability of accomplishing this end. I had been very attentive and serviceable to Fasil's servants while in the camp. I spoke greatly of their master ; and, when they went away, gave each of them a small present for himself, and a trifle also for Fasil. They had, on the other hand, been very importunate with me as a physician, to prescribe something for a cancer on the lip of Welleta Yasous, Fasil's principal general. I gave them a medicine recommended by Dr. Stork, a physician of Vienna, with directions for its use. They were overjoyed at having succeeded so well in their commission, and declared before the king, that Fasil, their master, would be more pleased with receiving a medicine that would restore Welleta Yasous to health, than with the magnificent appointments the *king's goodness* had bestowed upon him.

"If it is so," said I, "in this day of grace I will ask two favours."

"And that's a rarity," said the king; "out with them: I do not believe anybody is desirous that you should be refused."

"They are these," I replied,—“You shall give me, and oblige Fasil to ratify it, the village of Geesh, and the source where the Nile rises, that I may be from thence furnished with money for myself and servants; it shall stand me instead of Tangouri, near Emfras, and in value it is not worth so much. The second is, that, when I shall see that it is in his power to carry me to Geesh, and show me those sources, Fasil shall do it upon my request, without fee or reward, and without excuse or evasion.”

They all laughed at the easiness of the request. The king said, “Tell Fasil I do give the village of Geesh, and those fountains he is so fond of, to Yagoube and his posterity for ever, never to appear under another's name in the deftar, and never to be taken from him, or exchanged, either in peace or war.” Whereupon, the servants of Fasil swore to it in the name of their master; and the king's secretary and historian declared that he would enter it in the deftar in letters of gold.

It being resolved by the king and Michael to retire into Tigré, I had an interview with the king, in which I informed him that it was impossible for me to accompany him, as I was in bad health; that my heart was set on reaching the fountains of the Nile, and I hoped to accomplish it through his majesty's influence with Fasil; if not, I trusted soon to see him return, when it would be easy; but that, if I went to Tigré, I was fully persuaded that I should never have the resolution to come again to Gondar. He seemed to take heart at the confidence wi'

which I spoke of his return, and kindly desired me to stay at Koscam with the Iteghé.

> On the 5th of June, the king and Ras Michael left Gondar ; and, on the 10th, Gusho and Powussen entered it in triumph. Much confusion ensued. A young man, reputed to be a son of Yasous, was proclaimed king at Gondar, and took the name of Socinios. In the meanwhile, however, the king and Michael, by their wise behaviour, had insured the perfect allegiance of the inhabitants of the province of Tigré, to whom they gave remission of their whole taxes for a year, in consideration of their fidelity. The Ras himself declared, at the same time, that he would bear the expense of the campaign out of his own private fortune, till he had restored the king to his throne in Gondar. News arrived on the 27th October 1770, that Ras Michael was approaching the capital with 30,000 men. I had resolved to make a second attempt to reach the head of the Nile, encouraged thereto by the favourable turn things seemed to be taking. I looked on this news as a good omen, and next morning, after a sound night's sleep, I was ready for the journey.

## CHAPTER XIII.

*Second Journey to Discover the Source of the Nile—Interview with Fasil—I Tame a Vicious Horse—The Prayer of Peace—The Jumper—First Sight of the Mountains of Geesh—Roguery of Waldo, our Guide—The Mountains of the Moon—I ARRIVE AT THE FOUNTAINS OF THE NILE—Description of them—Melancholy Reflections—The Kefla Abay, or Servant of the River—Worship of the Nile—The Agows—Farewell to Geesh.*

ON the morning of the 28th of October 1770 we left Gondar, and, after an interesting journey of two days, reached Bamba, a collection of small villages, where Fasil was encamped. I immediately sent Ayto Aylo's servant, whom I had with me, to present my compliments, and acquaint him of my being on the way to visit him. I thought all my difficulties were now over; for I knew it was in his power to forward me to my journey's end, and his servants had assured me, not only of protection, but of a magnificent reception, if I chanced to find him in Maitsha. On the evening of the 30th I received a message to attend him, and at once repaired to his tent. After announcing myself, I waited about a quarter of an hour before I was admitted.

Fasil was sitting upon a cushion, with a lion's skin upon it, and another stretched like a carpet before his feet. He had

dirty cotton cloth wrapped about his head, and his upper cloak or garment was drawn tight about him, so as to cover his hands. I bowed, and went forward to kiss one of them, but it was so entangled in the cloth, that I was obliged to kiss the cloth instead of the hand. This was done, either as not expecting I should pay him that compliment (as I certainly should not have done, being one of the king's servants, if the king had been at Gondar), or else as a mark of disrespect—probably the latter, as his behaviour afterwards was very much of a piece with it.

There were no cushions or carpet in the tent, and only a little straw thrown thinly about it. I sat down upon the ground, thinking him sick, not knowing what all this meant. He looked steadfastly at me, saying, half under his breath, "Endett nawi? bogo nawi?" which is Amharic for "How do you do? Are you very well?" I made the usual answer, "Well, thank God." He again stopped, as if for me to speak. There was only one old man present, who was sitting on the floor, mending a bridle, a servant holding a candle to him. What he was I could not make out; he seemed to be a very bad cobbler, and took no notice of us.

"I am come," said I, "by your invitation and the king's leave, to pay my respects to you in your own government, begging that you would favour my curiosity, so far as to suffer me to see the country of the Agows, and the source of the Abay, or Nile, part of which I have seen in Egypt."

"The source of the Abay!" exclaimed he, with pretended surprise, "do you know what you are saying? Why, it is, God knows where, in the country of the Galla, wild, terrible people. The source of the Abay! Are you raving? Are you to get *there, do you think*, in a twelvemonth or more, or when?"

"Sir," said I, "the king told me it was near Sacala, and still nearer Geesh ; both villages of the Agows, and both in your government."

"And so you know Sacala and Geesh?" said he, whistling, and half angry.

"I can repeat the names that I hear," replied I ; "all Abyssinia knows the head of the Nile."

"Aye," says he, imitating my voice and manner, "but all Abyssinia won't carry you there, that I promise you."

"If you are resolved to the contrary," said I, "they will not. I wish you had told the king so in time, then I should not have attempted it. It was relying on you alone that I came so far, confident that, if all Abyssinia could not protect me there, your mere word could do it."

"Look you, Yagoube," said he, with a look of more complacency, "it is true I can do it ; and for the king's sake, who recommended it to me, I would do it ; but the chief priest, Abba Salama, has sent to me to desire me not to let you pass farther ; he says it is against the law of the land to permit Franks, like you, to go about the country, and that he has dreamed something ill will befall me if you go into Maitsha."

I was as much irritated as I thought it possible for me to be. "So, so," said I, "the time of priests, prophets, and dreamers is coming on again."

"I understand you," said he, laughing for the first time ; "I care as little for priests as Michael does, and for prophets too, but I would have you consider, the men of this country are not like yours ; a boy of these Galla would think nothing of killing a man of your country. You white people are all effeminate ; you are like so many women ; you are not fit for going into a pro-



vince where all is war, and inhabited by men, warriors from their cradle."

I was so provoked, that I believe I would have died if I had not, imprudent as it was, told him my mind, in reply. "Sir," said I, "I have passed through many of the most barbarous nations in the world ; all of them, except this clan of yours, have some great men among them, above using a defenceless stranger ill. But the worst individual among the most uncivilized people never treated me as you have done to-day, under your own roof, where I have come so far for protection."

"How?" asked Fasil.

"You have, in the first place," said I, "publicly called me Frank, the most odious name in this country, and sufficient to occasion me to be stoned to death. By Frank you mean one of the Romish religion, to which my nation is as averse as yours. Again, without having ever seen any of my countrymen but myself, you have discovered from that specimen that we are all cowards and effeminate people, like, or inferior to your boys and women. Look you, sir, I never gave myself out as more than an ordinary man in my own country, far less as a pattern of what was excellent in it. I am no soldier, though I know enough of war to see that yours are poor proficient in that trade, but there are soldiers, friends, and countrymen of mine, who would not think it an action to vaunt of, that with five hundred men they had trampled all yon naked savages into dust." On this Fasil made a feigned laugh, and seemed rather to take my freedom amiss. It was doubtless, a passionate and rash speech. "As for myself," continued I, "unskilled in war as I am, could it be now without further consequence, let me but be armed in *the fashion of my own country*, on horseback, as I was yesterday,

I should, without thinking myself overmatched, fight the two best horsemen you shall choose from this your army of famous men, who are warriors from their cradle ; and if, when the king arrives, you are not returned to your duty, and we meet again, as we did at Limjour, I will pledge myself, with his permission, to put you in mind of this promise." This did not make things better.

He repeated the word *duty* after me, and would have replied, but my nose burst out in a stream of blood ; and, that instant, Aylo's servant took hold of me by the shoulder to hurry me out of the tent. Fasil seemed a good deal concerned, for the blood streamed out upon my clothes. I returned to my tent, where the blood was soon stanchd by washing my face with cold water. I felt very much dissatisfied with myself for being put off my guard in this interview ; but it is impossible to conceive the greatness of the provocation. I will confess, in gratification to my critics, that I was from my infancy of a sanguine, passionate disposition ; very sensible of injuries which I had neither provoked nor deserved ; but much reflection, and the experience of long and dangerous travels, had, I flattered myself, abundantly subdued this natural disposition to feel offences which I could only revenge upon myself.

I was going to bed when Welleta Michael, Ras Michael's nephew, who had been taken prisoner by Fasil at Limjour, came into the tent to condole with me. He assured me that Fasil would not refuse me permission to visit the source of the Nile ; but said that he would be more complaisant if I had a present for him. I had indeed a very handsome one ; but had not time to open my baggage for it before the interview which has just been described. The assurance which Welleta Michael's words

gave me, worth more than all the quieting draughts in the world, composed my mind ; and, when I went to bed, I speedily fell into a sound sleep. At midnight, a couple of Fasil's servants with two lean sheep as a present, came to ask how I was, and to guard my tent during the night.

Next morning, a servant of Fasil's appeared with about twelve horses, saddled and bridled, and asked me to make choice of the one he was to present me with. I was very indifferent about these horses, having a good one of my own ; not one of them would have brought £7 in this country. The servant, who was very officious, pitched upon a bright bay pony, which he described as a favourite of his master's, but too quiet for him.

I ordered my bridle and saddle to be put on the horse, instead of those with which he was furnished. For the first two minutes after I mounted, I do not know whether I was most on the earth or in the air. He kicked behind, reared before, leaped like a deer, then attempted to gallop, taking the bridle in his teeth, but got a check which staggered him. He however continued to gallop, and, finding I slacked the bridle on his neck, he set off, and ran away as hard as he could, flinging out behind every ten yards. The ground was very favourable, and I was resolved on mastering him ; so, between two hills, half up the one, and half up the other, I so wrought him that he had neither breath nor strength, and I began to think he would scarce carry me to the camp.

The poor beast made a sad figure, cut to pieces in the sides, and bleeding at the jaws ; and the rascal that put me upon him, held up his hands on seeing the horse so mangled, and began to testify great surprise at the supposed harm I had done. I took notice of this, only saying, " carry that horse to your master ;

he may venture to ride him now, which is more than either he or you dared to have done this morning."

Fasil, on hearing of the trick which had been played upon me, protested that he was innocent of it, adding that the groom was in irons, and that, before many hours passed, he would be put to death. "Sir," said I, "as this man has attempted my life, according to the laws of the country, it is I that should name the punishment."

"It is very true," said Fasil; "take him, Yagoubé, and cut him in a thousand pieces, if you please, and give his body to the kites."

"Are you sincere in what you say?" asked I, "and will you have no after excuses?"

He swore solemnly that he would not.

"Then," said I, "I am a Christian : the way my religion teaches me to punish my enemies is by doing good for evil ; and therefore I desire you to set the man at liberty, and put him in the place he held before, for he has not been undutiful to you."

Every one seemed pleased with these sentiments ; and Fasil said, "A man that behaves as he does may go through any country." Shortly afterwards I gave him my present, which I had brought wrapped in a napkin. He appeared at first to have some scruples about accepting it ; but on my saying that his refusal would be the greatest affront ever put upon me, he received it with evident delight, and many expressions of gratitude. "Friend Yagoubé," said he, "I have nothing to return you for the present you have given me, for I did not expect to meet a man like you here in the fields ; but you will quickly be back, for the head of the Nile is near at hand, and we shall be on better terms at Goudar. I have given you a good man, well-

known in this country to be my servant ; he will go to Geesh with you, and return you to a friend of Ayto Aylo's and mine, Shalaka Welled Amlac ; he has the dangerous part of the country wholly in his hands, and will carry you safe to Gondar. When will you set out ? To-morrow ?”

I replied, with many thanks for his kindness, that I wished to proceed immediately.

“ You are right,” said Fasil. He then ordered several of his attendants to furnish me with clean clothes in the place of those I wore, which were spotted with blood ; after which he took a fine loose muslin garment which he had put on himself new that morning, and put it about my shoulders, saying, “ Bear witness, I give to Yagoube the Agow Geesh as fully and freely as the king has given it to me.” I bowed and kissed his hand ; and he then pointed to me to sit down.

“ Hear what I say to you,” continued Fasil ; “ I think it right for you to make the best of your way now, for you will be the sooner back at Gondar. You need not be alarmed at the wild people you speak of ; they are commanded by Welleta Yasous, who is your friend. You see those seven people (I never saw more thief-like fellows in my life !) ; these are all leaders and chiefs of the Galla—savages, if you please ; they are all your brethren.” I bowed. “ You may go through their country as if it were your own, without a man hurting you.” Fasil then jabbered something to them in Galla, to which they all answered by the wildest howl I ever heard, striking themselves on the breast, apparently assenting. After some further conversation, he said, “ Now, before all these men, ask me any thing you have at heart ; and, be it what it may, they know I cannot deny it you.”

“ *Send me,*” said I, “ as conveniently as possible, to the

head of the Nile, and return me and my attendants in safety, after allowing me to gratify my curiosity in my own way."

He turned to the seven chiefs; and they, with Fasil and myself, Guebra Ehud, Welleta Michael, and the Fit-Auraris, all stood in a circle. While we raised the palms of our hands, Fasil and his Galla repeated together, with great apparent devotion, a prayer about a minute long. "Now," said Fasil, "go in peace, you are a Galla; this is a curse upon them, and their children, their corn, grass, and cattle, if ever they lift their hand against you or yours, or do not defend you against others."

Upon this, I offered to kiss his hand before taking my leave; and we all went to the door of the tent, where there stood a very handsome grey horse, bridled and saddled. "Take this horse," said Fasil, "as a present from me; but do not mount it yourself, drive it before you saddled and bridled as it is; no man of Maitsha will touch you when he sees that horse." I then took a humble and respectful leave of him, and also of my newly acquired brethren the Galla, praying inwardly that I might never see them again.

I overtook my servants, who had set out before me, at the small village of Dingleber. On the following day we passed the river Kelti, a tributary of the Nile, and afterwards the Nile itself, and pitched our tent near a body of Galla troops, commanded by a noted robber called the Jumper. I paid a visit to this personage the following morning, and found him besmearing his body with melted tallow, and adorning his head and neck with the entrails of an ox. Our conversation was neither long nor interesting; I was overcome with the smell of blood and carrion, and soon took my leave.

The territory of Aroussi, through which we passed now, is by

much the most pleasant we had seen in Abyssinia—perhaps it is equal to anything the East can produce. The whole is finely shaded with acacia trees, I mean the *Acacia vera*, or Egyptian thorn, the tree which, in the sultry parts of Africa, produces the gum-Arabic. The ground below these trees produces wild oats of a prodigious height and size. I often made this grain into cakes, in remembrance of Scotland ; but the Abyssinians never could relish them. I believe that this is the oat in its original state, and that it is degenerated with us. All Aroussi is finely watered with small streams, the most considerable of which is the Assar. The strength of vegetation which the moisture of this stream produces, supported by the action of a very warm sun, is such as one might expect. The trees and shrubs bear blossoms of every colour ; and their branches are crowded with birds of the richest and most varied plumage, which seem to fix their residence on the banks of the river, without any desire to wander to any distance in the neighbouring fields. But there is this serious defect—all the birds, except one or two, are destitute of song ; and few of the flowers have any enticing odour.

After passing the Assar, and several villages belonging to Goutto, our course being S.E., we had, for the first time, a distinct view of the high mountain of Geesh, the long-wished-for end of our dangerous and troublesome journey. This was on the 2d of November 1770. On the afternoon of the same day, we came to the banks of the Nile, which it was necessary for us to cross here. The passage is both difficult and dangerous, the current being strong, and the channel full of holes and large stones. Here I saw the ancient veneration for the Nile still existing among the Agows. They protested with great vehemence against any man crossing *stream*, mounted either on horse or mule ; unloaded our bag-

gage, and laid it upon the grass ; and insisted on our putting off our shoes. Woldo, the guide whom Fasil had given me, made me a sign to cross as they desired ; and after I had been assisted by them to the other side, the beasts were all conducted across. The baggage still lay on the grass ; and Woldo sat down on a green hillock beside it, with his small stick in one hand, and his lighted pipe in the other, my people being ranged behind him. Woldo began gravely to exhort the Agows to lose no time in carrying our baggage over on their shoulders. This proposal they treated with ridicule, insinuating that he should first settle with them a price for their trouble. Woldo, with an air of great wisdom and moderation, appealed to them whether they had not, of their own accord, insisted on our crossing the river on foot, had unloaded our baggage, and sent the mules to the other side without our consent. The poor people candidly declared that they had done so, because none are permitted to cross the Nile in any other manner ; but that they would carry our baggage over safely and willingly for pay. This word was no sooner uttered than, apparently in a violent passion, he leapt up, laid by his pipe, took his stick, and, running in among them, cried out, “ And who am I, then ? a girl, a woman, a Pagan dog, like yourselves ? and who is Waragna Fasil ? are you not his slaves ? You want payment do you ? here is your payment ! ” upon which he flew at them with his stick, laying about him furiously. He then called out to my people for a gun, upon which the whole of these poor wretches ran off and hid themselves among the bushes.

I sat still, wondering what was to become of our baggage. Woldo crossed, with the whole of my servants, leaving it lying on the grass, without any guard whatever. He then desired



all to get on horseback, driving the mules before us, which we accordingly did ; and I suppose we had not advanced a hundred yards before we saw a greater number of people than formerly run down to where our baggage was lying, and while one of them crossed the river to desire us to stay where we were, the rest brought the whole over in a few minutes. This did not satisfy our guide. He pretended that he had been robbed of his gold, and plainly accused the poor Agows, who, to secure themselves against any persecutions on this account, managed to raise for him the amount that he said he had lost.

I now thought it the proper time to inform Woldo of the manner in which I was resolved to behave among the Agows, who, I knew, had been reduced to absolute poverty by Fasil. I told him that I was resolved to free the Agows of Geesh for that year from any taxes due to the king or Fasil ; and that I would pay for anything I wanted either from them or the other Agows. Woldo by no means approved of this ; but he had to acquiesce.

Our road the following day (3d November) lay at first through a plain covered with acacia trees, then over some elevated ground, whence we descended into a marshy plain. In this plain the Nile winds more in the space of four miles than, I believe, any river in the world. It is not here more than twenty feet broad, and one deep. During this day's march the sun was so hot that it quite overcame us ; and even Woldo declared himself to be so ill, that he could not go any further. I could easily see that Woldo was merely pretending ; but I did not doubt that he would give me as much trouble as if he were really ill. In the afternoon, however, we contrived to push forward for the triple range of mountains, in which is situated Geesh, where are the *long-expected* fountains of the Nile.

This triple ridge of mountains, disposed one range behind the other, nearly in form of arcs of three concentric circles, seems to suggest an idea that they are the *Montes Lunae* of antiquity, or the Mountains of the Moon, at the foot of which the Nile was said to rise ; in fact, there are no others. Amid-Amid may perhaps exceed half a mile in height ; they certainly do not arrive at three quarters ; and are greatly short of that fabulous height given them by Kircher. These mountains are all excellent soil, and everywhere covered with fine pasture. On the middle of the ascent are villages, built of a white sort of grass, which makes them conspicuous from a great distance ; the bottom is all grass, where their cattle feed continually under their eye ; these, upon any alarm, they drive up to the top of the mountains, out of danger.

We were seldom lucky enough to get the people of the villages to await our arrival. The fears of the march of the Galla, and the uncertainty of their destination, made them always believe we were detachments of that army, a belief to which the presence of Fasil's horse very much contributed. I determined to try whether, by taking away that scarecrow from before us, and riding him myself, things would not change for the better. Woldo had scruples about my riding his master's horse, regarding it as something like sitting in the king's seat at Gondar, which is high treason. I compounded with his scruples by laying aside Fasil's saddle and riding the horse with my own.

After coasting for some little time along the side of the valley, we began to ascend a mountain on the right. The climate here was exceedingly mild, the country covered with the finest verdure, and the mountains with beautiful trees and shrubs, which bore extraordinary fruits and flowers. Reaching the top, we

came in sight of Sacala, which extends in the plain below, from west to the point of south, and there joins with the village of Geesh. About mid-day we reached the plain of Sacala, which is full of small, low villages, and halted on an eminence where the market of the district is held every Saturday. Horned cattle, many of them of the highest beauty, large asses, honey, butter, ensete for food, and a manufacture of the leaf of that plant, painted with different colours like mosaic work for mats, were here exposed for sale in great plenty.

At a quarter after one o'clock we passed the river Gumatti, the boundary of the plain; we were now ascending a very steep and rugged mountain, the worst pass we had met on the whole journey. Our only road was a sheep or goat track, obstructed with large stones, and that execrable thorn, the kantuffa. From the top of this mountain we had a distinct view of all the remaining territory of Sacala, the mountain Geesh, and the church of St. Michael Geesh. Immediately below us was the Nile itself, strangely diminished in size, being now a mere brook, with scarcely enough of water to turn a mill. I could not satiate myself with the sight, revolving in my mind all those classic prophecies that had given the Nile up to perpetual obscurity and concealment. I was awakened out of this delightful reverie by an alarm that we had lost Woldo, our guide. The servants could not agree when they last saw him. Strates and Aylo's servant were in the wood shooting; but, on their return, they said they knew nothing of him. They had seen enormous baboons, and supposed that Woldo might have fallen in with some of them, and been devoured. Others conjectured, with more plausibility, that it was a trick on the part of our guide, *who had been pretending to be sick, and unable to proceed, for*

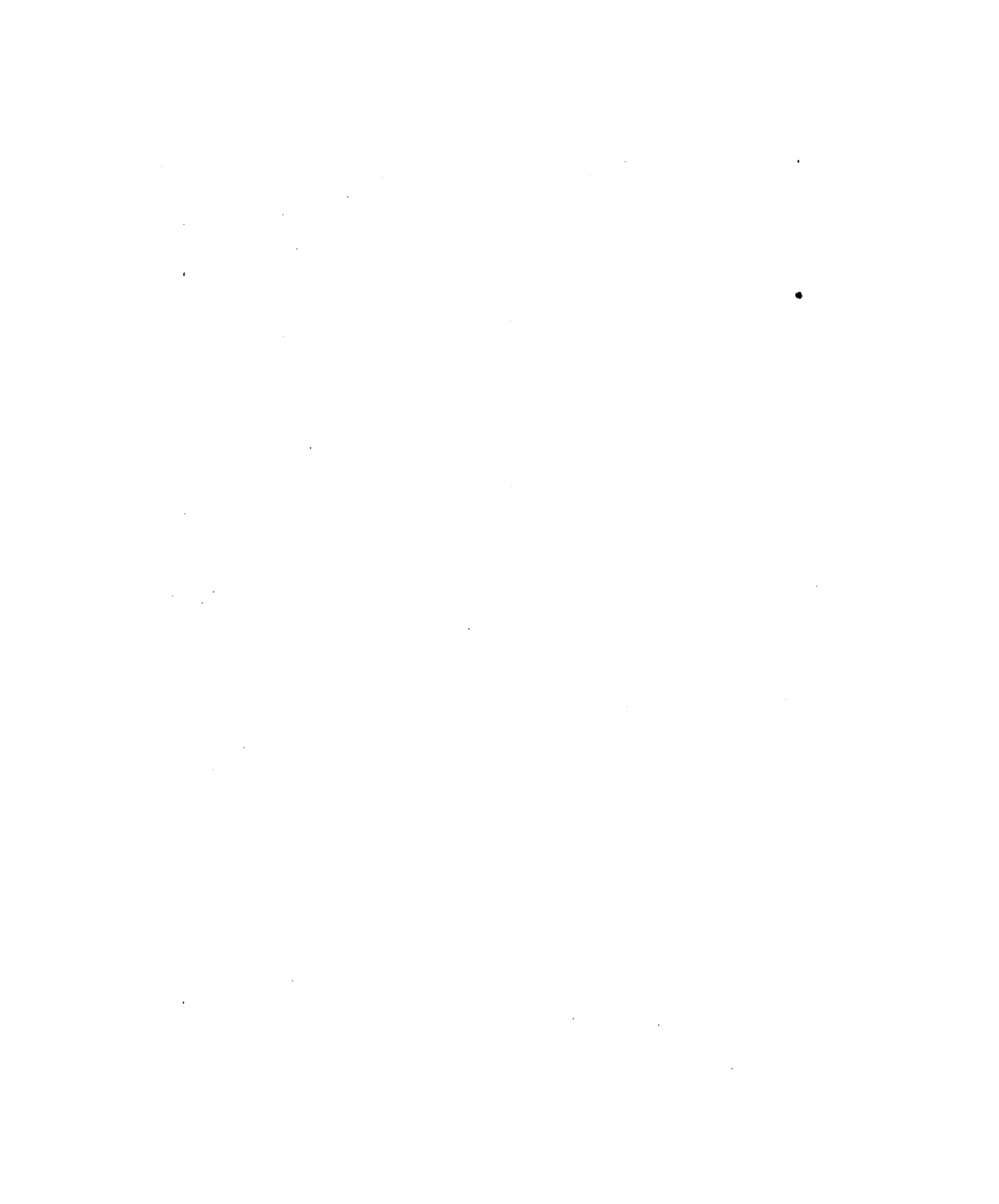
several days past. In a short time Woldo made his appearance, looking as if he was really ill ; but I saw at once that his illness was feigned. The determined way in which I spoke to him, declaring that he was an impostor, and that I would expose him to his master, speedily brought him to his senses, and cured him of his lameness. I ascertained that he had taken a great fancy to a handsome silk sash which I wore ; whereupon I took it off and gave it to him. He received it with many apologies. "Come, come," said I, "we understand each other ; no more words ; it is now late ; lose no more time, but carry me to Geesh and the head of the Nile, directly ; and show me the hill that separates me from it." He then carried me round to the south side of the church, out of the grove of trees that surrounded it.

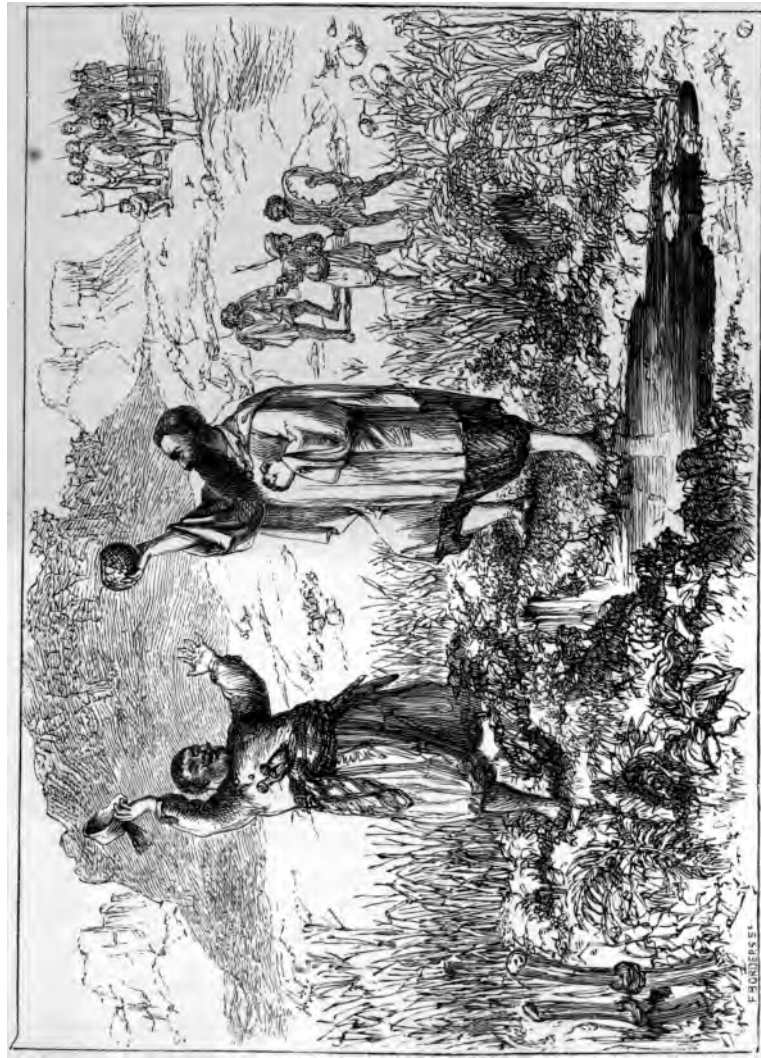
"This is the hill," said he, looking archly, "that, when you were on the other side of it, was between you and the fountains of the Nile ; there is no other. Look at that hillock of green sod, in the middle of that watery spot ; it is in that the two fountains of the Nile are to be found ! Geesh is on the face of the rock where yon green trees are. If you go the length of the fountains, pull off your shoes, for these people are all Pagans, worse than those who were at the ford, and they believe in nothing that you believe, but only in the river, to which they pray every day, as if it were God ; but this, perhaps, you may do likewise."

Half undressed as I was, by the loss of my sash, and throwing my shoes off, I ran down the hill towards the little island of green sods, which was about two hundred yards distant. The whole side of the hill was thickly grown over with flowers, the large bulbous roots of which, appearing above the ground, and their skins coming off on treading upon them, occasioned a

two very severe falls before I reached the brink of the marsh. I after this came to the island of green turf, which was in form of an altar, apparently the work of art ; and I stood in rapture over the principal fountain, which rises in the middle of it. I reached the source of the Nile on the 4th of November 1770.

It is easier to imagine than to describe the situation of my mind at that moment—standing in that spot which had baffled the genius, industry, and inquiry of both ancients and moderns, for the course of near three thousand years. Kings had attempted this discovery at the head of armies ; and each expedition was distinguished from the last only by the difference of the numbers which had perished, and agreed alone in the disappointment which had followed them all. Fame, riches, and honour had been held out for a series of ages to every individual of the myriads those princes commanded, without having produced one man capable of gratifying the curiosity of his sovereign, or wiping off the stain upon the enterprise and abilities of mankind, or adding this desideratum for the encouragement of geography. Though a mere private Briton, I triumphed here, in my own mind, over kings and their armies. Every comparison was leading nearer and nearer to presumption, when the place itself where I stood, the object of my vainglory, suggested what depressed my short-lived triumphs. I was but a few minutes arrived at the sources of the Nile, through numberless dangers and sufferings, the least of which would have overwhelmed me, but for the continual goodness and protection of Providence ; I was, however, then but half through my journey, and all those dangers which I had already passed, awaited me again on my return. I found a despondency fast gaining ground upon me, and blasting *the crown of laurels* I had too rashly woven for myself.





I had in my hand a large cup made of a cocoa-nut shell, which I procured in Arabia. He drank to the king speedily and cheerfully, and tossed up his cap with a loud huzza. — P. 237.

I resolved to divert my mind from these thoughts, till I could, on more sober reflection, overcome their progress. I saw Strates expecting me on the side of the hill. "Strates," said I, "faithful squire, come and triumph with your Don Quixote, at that island of Barataria, to which we have most wisely and fortunately brought ourselves! Come and triumph with me over all the kings of the earth, all their armies, all their philosophers, all their heroes."

"Sir," said Strates, "I do not understand a word of what you say; you very well know I am no scholar. But you had much better leave that bog—come into the house and look after Woldo; I fear he has something further to seek than your sash, for he has been talking with the old devil-worshipper ever since we arrived."

"Come," said I, "take a draught of this excellent water, and drink with me a health to His Majesty King George III., and a long line of princes." I had in my hand a large cup, made of a cocoa-nut shell, which I procured in Arabia. He drank to the king speedily and cheerfully, with the addition of "confusion to his enemies," and tossed up his cap with a loud huzza.

"Now friend," said I, "here is to a more humble, but still a sacred name; here is to—Maria!"

He asked if that was the Virgin Mary. I answered, "In faith I believe so, Strates." He did not speak, but only gave a humph of disapprobation.

"Strates," said I, "here is to our happy return. Can you ever be satiated with this excellent water?"

"You must forgive me," replied Strates, "if I refuse to drink any more water. They say these savages pray over that hole every morning to the devil, and I am afraid I feel his horns



in my belly already, from the great draught I took at first. As many toasts as you please in wine, or, better still, in brandy ; but no more water for Strates !”

“Come, come,” said I, “don’t be peevish ; I have but one toast more to drink. If you refuse to drink it, you are henceforward unworthy of the name of Greek ; you do not even deserve that of Christian. Here is to Catherine, Empress of all the Russias, and success to her heroes at Paros ; and hear my prediction from this altar to-day—Ages shall not pass before this ground, whereon I now stand, will become a flourishing part of her dominions !”\*

Strates, on this, leaped a yard from the ground. “Give me the cup,” said he ; “I will drink that health though I should die !” He drank it, shouting “Huzza ! Catherine and victory !” whilst he tossed his cap in the air.

A number of the Agows had appeared upon the hill, gazing in silent wonder at the proceedings of Strates and myself at the altar ; and several of them asked Woldo, who was entering the village, what was the meaning of all this. Woldo told them that the man was out of his senses, having been bitten by a mad dog. This immediately reconciled them to us ; and they said that he would infallibly be cured by the Nile, but the custom, after such a misfortune, was to drink the water in the morning, fasting. I was very well pleased to discover thus a connection, believed to subsist at this day, between the Nile and its ancient governor, the dog-star.

\* Bruce seems to have held very decided and advanced views as to the future of Russia. The opinion he has expressed in a previous chapter (see page 70) is one which, notwithstanding the popularity of the late Russian war, *is shared in by many thoughtful men of the present day.*

The Agows of Damot pay divine honours to the Nile, sacrificing multitudes of cattle to the spirit which is supposed to reside at its source. They are divided into clans or tribes ; and it is said there is never a feud between any two of these clans, any causes of difference being amicably settled at the annual convocation of the tribes at the source of the river.

From the edge of the cliff of Geesh, above where the village is situated, the ground slopes, with a very easy descent, due north, and lands you at the edge of a triangular marsh. In the middle of this marsh arises a hillock, of a circular form, about three feet above its level, and having a diameter of about twelve feet. This hillock, which is firmly built of turf, and kept constantly in repair, is the altar on which the religious ceremonies of the Agows are performed. A shallow trench surrounds it, and collects the water which flows from a hole in the middle of the hillock, the principal fountain of the Nile. This hole is about three feet in diameter, and six feet in depth. It has no ebullition or motion of any kind discernible on its surface, and the quantity of water did not appear to increase or diminish all the time of my stay at Geesh, though we made plentiful use of it.

Ten feet from this spring is the second fountain, about eleven inches in diameter, and eight feet deep ; and at twenty feet there is a third, two feet in diameter, and six feet in depth. Both of these are enclosed, like the first, by an altar of turf. The water from all these joins and flows eastward, in quantity sufficient to fill a pipe of about two inches diameter.

I made no fewer than thirty-five observations, with a view to determining with the utmost precision the latitude of the fountains of the Nile, and found the mean result to be  $10^{\circ} 59' 25''$  north latitude. Equally careful observations proved them to be

in  $36^{\circ} 55' 30''$  east longitude. The mercury in the barometer indicated a height above the sea of more than two miles. On the 6th of November, at a quarter past five in the morning, Fahrenheit's thermometer stood at  $44^{\circ}$ ; at noon it was  $96^{\circ}$ ; and at sunset  $46^{\circ}$ .

That night of my arrival, melancholy reflections upon my present state, the doubtfulness of my return in safety; the consciousness of the pain that I was then occasioning to my friends, who were daily expecting information regarding my situation, which it was not in my power to give them; and some other thoughts, perhaps, still nearer the heart, crowded upon my mind, and forbade all approach of sleep. I was at that very moment in possession of what had, for many years, been the principal object of my ambition and wishes: indifference, which from the usual infirmity of human nature follows, at least for a time, complete enjoyment, had taken the place of gratification. The marsh and the fountains, upon comparison with the rise of many of our rivers, became now a trifling object in my sight. I remembered that magnificent scene in my own native country, where the Tweed, Clyde, and Annan rise in one hill; three rivers, as I now thought, not inferior to the Nile in beauty, preferable to it in the cultivation of those countries through which they flow; vastly superior to it in the virtues and qualities of the inhabitants, and in the beauty of its flocks, crowding its pastures in peace, without fear of violence from man or beast. I had seen the rise of the Rhine and Rhone, and the more magnificent sources of the Saone. I began, in my sorrow, to treat the inquiry about the source of the Nile as the violent effort of a distempered fancy.

"What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,  
That he should weep for her?"

Relaxed, not refreshed, by unquiet and imperfect sleep, I started from my bed in the utmost agony. I went to the door of my tent ; everything was still ; the Nile, at whose head I stood, was not capable either to promote or to interrupt my slumbers, but the coolness and serenity of the night braced my nerves, and chased away those phantoms that, while in bed, had oppressed and tormented me.

It was true that numerous dangers, hardships, and sorrows had beset me through this half of my excursion ; but it was still as true, that another Guide, more powerful than my own courage, health, or understanding (if any of these can be called our own), had uniformly protected me hitherto ; and my confidence was not abated that the same Guide was able to conduct me to my now wished-for home. I immediately resumed my former fortitude. The Nile, indeed, just rose from springs as all other rivers do ; but it widely differed from them all in this, that it was the palm held out for three thousand years to all the nations in the world, as a *detur dignissimo*.\* In my cool hours I had thought it worth attempting this at the risk of my life—resolved either to perish or lay this discovery, a trophy in which I could have no competitor, for the honour of my country, at the feet of my sovereign.

It is time now to return to Woldo, whom we had left settling our reception with the chief of the village of Geesh. The miserable Agows eagerly assembled round him, desiring to know how long we were to stay among them. They saw, by the horse driven before us, that we belonged to Fasil, and suspected that they were to maintain us as long as we chose to tarry among them ; but Woldo, with great address, dispelled their

\* Let it be given to the most worthy.

fears. He informed them of the king's grant to me of the village of Geesh, telling them that a very different master from the tyrannical Fasil had come among them ; that we would pay for everything ; and that no military service was to be exacted from them. These news circulated with great rapidity ; and I met with a hearty welcome on my arrival at the village.

Woldo had asked a house from the Shum, who very civilly granted me his own ; and four or five other houses were procured for my attendants. Our hearts were now perfectly at ease, and we passed a very merry evening. Strates, above all, endeavoured, with many a bumper of the good hydromel of Buré, to subdue the devil that he had swallowed in the enchanted water.

The Shum gave us his three daughters as housekeepers. The eldest, called Irepone, took the charge upon her very readily. She was about sixteen years of age, of a stature above the middle size, remarkably genteel ; and, colour apart, would have been a beauty in any country in Europe. She was, besides, very sprightly ; we understood not one word of her language, though she comprehended very easily the signs that we made.

The following morning a white cow, a present from Fasil, was killed, and every one invited to partake of her. The Shum, priest of the river, should likewise have been of the party, but he declined sitting or eating with us, though his sons were not so scrupulous. I insinuated myself into the graces of the Shum, whose title is Kefla Abay, "the servant of the river," and obtained a good deal of information regarding the religion of the Agows. They called the river, "The Everlasting God, Light of the World, Eye of the World, God of Peace, Saviour, and Father of the Universe." Once a year, on the first appearance of the dog-star, the *Kefla Abay* assembles all the heads of the clans at the principal

altar, where a black heifer, that never bore a calf, is sacrificed. Its head is cut off, plunged in the fountain, and then wrapped up in the hide, previously sprinkled with water from the fountain. The carcase is then split in half, and cleaned with extraordinary care ; and, thus prepared, it is laid on the hillock over the first fountain, and washed all over with its water, while the principal people carry water in their joined hands from the other two fountains. The carcase is then divided among the different tribes, and eaten on the spot, raw, and with the Nile water, to the exclusion of any other liquor. The bones are burned to ashes in the place where they sit. The head, wrapped in the skin, is carried into a huge cave in the cliff ; but I could not ascertain what further becomes of it.

The Shum was a man of about seventy years of age, with a long white beard—an ornament rare in Abyssinia. Round his body he wore a skin, fastened with a broad belt ; and above this a cloak, with the hood up, covering his head. He was bare-legged, but wore sandals, which he put off whenever he approached the bog where the Nile rises—a mark of respect which we were all likewise obliged to render.

The Agows, in whose country the Nile rises, are, in point of number, one of the most considerable nations in Abyssinia. They supply Gondar and its neighbourhood with the necessaries of life ; cattle, honey, butter, wheat, hides, wax, etc., being constantly conveyed to the capital by as many as 1000 or 1500 at a time. To prevent their butter from being spoiled by the long journey, they use an herb called moc-moco, which they bruise and mix with it—a small quantity preserving it fresh for a considerable time.

The Agows are said not to be long livers ; but it is difficult

to ascertain their precise age. The women are marriageable about eleven. The clothing of these tribes is all of hides, which they tan and soften in a manner peculiar to themselves.

On the 9th of November, having finished my memoranda regarding the various localities at the sources of the Nile, I traced again on foot, as I had repeatedly done before, the whole course of this river from the fountains to the plain of Goutto.

Our business being now done, nothing remained for us but to depart. We had passed our time in perfect harmony ; the address of Woldo, and the great attachment of our friend Irepone, had kept our house in a cheerful abundance. We had lived, it is true, too magnificently for philosophers, but neither idly nor riotously ; and, I believe, never will any sovereign of Geesh be again so popular, or reign over his subjects with greater mildness. I had practised medicine gratis, and killed, for three days successively, a cow each day, for the poor and the neighbours. I had clothed the high priest of the Nile from head to foot, as also his two sons, and had decorated two of his daughters with beads of all the colours of the rainbow, adding every other little present they seemed fond of, or that we thought would be agreeable. As for our amiable Irepone, we had reserved for her the choicest of our presents, the most valuable of every article we had with us ; we gave her, besides, some gold. She exhibited much grief at parting with her friends, tearing her fine hair, and throwing herself upon the floor. She came not to the door till we had already set out, and then followed us with her eyes, and her good wishes, till we were out of sight and hearing.

*I took my leave of Kefla Abay, the venerable priest of the*

most famous river in the world, who recommended me with great earnestness to the care of his god, which Strates humorously enough observed, meant nothing less than that he hoped the devil would take me. All the young men in the village, with lances and shields, attended us to Saint Michael Sacala, that is, to the borders of their country, and the end of my little sovereignty.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

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ON the 10th of November 1770 we left Geesh on our return to Gondar, and on the evening of the following day we reached the house of Shalaka Welled Amlac. I had cured this man of fever when residing at Koscam, and I found that the benefit was not forgotten. We were entertained that night according to the usual customs of Maitsha, and the country of the Galla, some of which would be “more honoured in the breach than the observance.” We spent the next day also with Welled Amlac, at the desire of Fasil’s wife, who was there. I had observed a melancholy gloom upon her face, that seemed to indicate a mind *not at ease*. On my expressing my wonder that her husband

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In the afternoon we distributed our presents among the ladies. Fasil's wife, on my first request, gave me a lock of her fine hair from the root, which has ever since suspended a plummet of an ounce and a half at the index of my three-feet quadrant. Next morning, having settled accounts with our host, we resumed our journey. At the small town of Delakus we crossed the Nile, here grown a tolerably considerable stream. After passing two small streams, tributaries of the Nile, we alighted about eight in the evening at the village of Googue. We found the people of Googue the most savage and inhospitable we had yet met with. They absolutely refused to give us any food for ourselves or our horses ; and it was only after we had waited out of doors a considerable time that they conducted us to a house where we got shelter from the rain, which was falling heavily. We kindled a large fire in the middle of the house, and kept it burning all night, as well for guard as for drying ourselves. We little knew, at the time, that it was probably the only means of saving our lives ; for, in the morning, we found the whole village sick of the fever that prevails so commonly in Abyssinia, in low grounds and plains, in the neighbourhood of rivers that run in valleys. This fever begins immediately with the sunshine, after the first rains, that is, while there are intervals of rain and sunshine ; it ceases upon the earth

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being thoroughly soaked in July and August, and begins again in September, ceasing everywhere in November. Two families had died of this fever out of the house into which we were put—a fact which I ascertained on the following morning, and which considerably alarmed me. A doze of bark, however, in a glass of aquavitæ, strengthened our spirits, and was at least a medicine to the imagination.

Nothing of importance occurred during the remaining portion of our journey. On the 19th, my servants, whom I sent on before me, arrived at Gondar. Two things chiefly occupied my mind, and prevented me from accompanying my servants and baggage into Gondar. The first was my desire of instantly knowing the state of Ozoro Esther's health ; the second was, to avoid Fasil, till I knew a little more of Ras Michael and the king. I therefore proceeded with all diligence to Koscam. I went straight to the Iteghé's apartments, but was not admitted, as she was at her devotions. In crossing one of the courts, however, I met a slave of Ozoro Esther, who, instead of answering the question I put to her, gave a loud shriek, and went to inform her mistress. I found that princess greatly recovered, as her anxiety about Fasil had ceased.

Fasil had been raised by Socinios, who had mounted the throne when King Tecla Haimanout and Ras Michael retired from Gondar, to the dignity of Ras, in the hope that thus his powerful assistance might be secured in the coming contest. He dissembled for a while ; but at length the usurper, having been informed of a secret compact existing between him and Michael, and having sent Powussen, one of his generals, to surprise him at Gondar, where he was, attended by only about 1000 *nen*, he threw off the mask, and publicly avowed that it was his

intention to restore Tecla Haimanout to the throne. He declared that, rather than fail in it, he would replace Michael Suhul in all his posts and dignities. Powussen of Begemder, meanwhile, did not disregard the orders of Socinios. Marching to surprise Fasil, he fell in with the troops of Aylo, dispersing them with little resistance. The news of this conflict, however, put Fasil upon his guard. He at once proclaimed Tecla Haimanout king ; and, encamping within two miles of Gondar, he invited all who wished to escape the vengeance of Michael to join his standard. He then retreated to Dingleber, on the side of the lake, where he cut off the supplies of Socinios from that side, occasioning a great famine in Gondar, where many poor people perished.

Hitherto I had had no intercourse with Socinios, though residing regularly either at Koscam or Gondar. On the 6th of December, however, I had a message from the palace, requiring my attendance. On my arrival, I was immediately admitted. Socinios was sitting, his eyes half-closed, red with last night's debauch ; he was apparently at that moment much in liquor ; his mouth was full of tobacco, and he was constantly spitting in a most disgusting manner. He was dressed like the late king ; but in everything else how unlike ! Hamlet's lines described him exactly :—

“ A murderer and a villain :

A slave that is not twentieth part the tithe

Of your preceding lord ; a vice of kings ;

A cut-purse of the empire, and the rule,

That from a shelf the precious diadem stole,

And put it in his pocket ;

A king of shreds and patches.”

“ Wherefore is it,” said Socinios, “that you, who are a *great man*, do not attend the palace ? You were constantly with

Tecla Haimanout, the exile, or usurper, in peace and war. You used to ride with him, and divert him with your tricks on horseback. Where is all the money you got from Ras el Feel?"

"I am no great man," replied I, "even in my own country; one proof of this is my being here in yours." You are perfectly well informed as to the kindness the late king showed me, but this was entirely from his goodness, and no merit of mine. The gold I spent in his service, and for my own honour. I am no buffoon, to show tricks. The profession of arms is my birthright, and with these, at his desire, I have often diverted the king, as an amusement worthy of him, and by no means below me."

"The king!" exclaimed he, in a violent passion, "and who, then, am I? Do you know, with a stamp of my foot I can order you to be hewn to pieces in an instant? You are a Frank, a dog, a liar, and a slave! Why did you tell the Iteghé that your house was robbed of fifty ounces of gold? (My house at Gondar was robbed the night before by a body of Mahometans, with this drunkard at their head, and everything valuable carried off or destroyed. I escaped personal injury by being absent at Koscam at the time). Any other king but myself would order your eyes to be pulled out in a moment, and your carcass thrown to the dogs."

He spoke truly when he said I was in his power; bad kings have most executioners. I was not, however, dismayed. I was, in my own mind, though a stranger and alone, superior to such a beast upon a throne.

"I can bear this no longer," said an old man of noble appearance, who had been sitting in a corner of the room; "we shall become a proverb, and the hatred of all mankind. What have *you to do with Yagoubé*, or why did you send for him?"

This man was Sanuda, who had been appointed Ras before Fasil was elevated to that dignity. While seemingly a devoted adherent of Socinios, he was in reality at this very time plotting the restoration of the king.

"You are very angry to-day, Baba," said Socinios, with an air of drunken drollery. Then, turning to me, he said, "To-morrow, see you bring me that horse which Yasine sent you to Koscam. Slave and Frank, bring me the horse!"

The old man took me by the hand, saying in a whisper, "Don't fear him, I am here; go home. Next time you come here, you will have horses enough with you."

Shortly after this interview, intelligence arrived of the approach of Michael with a large army. Socinios fled. His followers, afraid that his presence with them might get them into trouble, stripped him naked, put him on a good horse, and dismissed him to seek his fortune.\*

On the 21st of December a message came to me from Ozoro Esther, desiring me to accompany her son Confu to meet the king. Next day, accordingly, I repaired to Mariam Ohha, where the royal army was encamped. My first business was to wait on Ras Michael, who admitted me as soon as I was announced. I kissed the ground before him, though he stretched out his hands to prevent me. As soon as I rose, without desiring me to sit down, he asked aloud, "Have you seen the king?" I answered, "Not yet." "Have you any complaint to make against any one, or grace to ask?" "None," I replied, "but the continuance of

\* Socinios was subsequently sent to the king, loaded with irons. He was condemned to death; but, being in his manners and person utterly despicable, the king directed that he should serve as a slave in his kitchen, whence he was taken some time afterwards, and hanged for theft.



your favour." He answered, "That I am sure I owe you ; go to the king." I took my leave. I had been jostled and almost squeezed to death, attempting to enter, but large room was made for me retiring. Man is the same creature everywhere, although different in colour ; the court of London and that of Abyssinia are, in their principles, one.

I went immediately to the king. When I kissed the ground before him—"There," said he, "is an arch rebel ; what punishment shall we inflict upon him ?" "Your Majesty's justice," said I, "will not suffer you to inflict any punishment upon me that can possibly equal the pleasure I feel this day at seeing you sitting there." He smiled with great good nature, giving me first the back, and then the palm of his hand to kiss. He then made me a sign to stand in my place, which I did for a little ; and, seeing that he was then upon business that I knew nothing of, I took leave of him. I could not help reflecting, as I went, that, of all the vast multitude then in my sight, I was, perhaps, the only one destitute either of hope or fear.

All Gondar, and the neighbouring towns and villages, had poured out their inhabitants to meet the king upon his return. The fear of Ras Michael was the cause of all this ; for every one feared lest, by being absent, he should be thought an adherent of Socinios. The spectacle was a very striking one. On the slope of a beautiful green hill, were about 60,000 men and women, all dressed in cotton garments as white as snow. The priests from all the convents for many miles round, in dresses of yellow and white cotton, with their crosses and drums, added variety to the scene. It was the month of December, which in Abyssinia is the most agreeable time of the year, when there is no danger from *rain in the day* or dew in the night. If the remembrance of the

past had not hung heavy on some hearts, this would have been only a party of pleasure assembled to convey the king to his capital.

Ras Michael had brought with him from Tigré about 20,000 men, the best soldiers of the empire. About 6000 of these were musqueteers, and about 12,000 were armed with lances and shields ; a large proportion of them were horsemen, who scoured the country in all directions, to collect such unhappy people as were destined for public example.

On the 23d of December, we encamped on the Magetch, just below Gondar. This occasioned a report that the king and Ras Michael had come determined to burn the town, and put the inhabitants to the sword. The greatest consternation prevailed, and many fled to Fasil, who, they thought, might be able to protect them.

As for me, the king's behaviour showed me plainly that all was not right, and an accident in the way confirmed it. In crossing the deep bed of a brook, a branch of the kantuffa plant caught hold of the king's hair, and the fold of the cloak that covered his head then spread itself over his whole shoulder in such a manner that, notwithstanding all the help that could be given him, no remedy remained but that he should throw off the upper garment, and appear in the under one, or waistcoat, with his head and face bare before all the spectators. This is accounted great disgrace to a king, who always appears covered in public. However, he did not seem to be ruffled, but, with great composure, and in rather a low voice, he called twice, " Who is the Shum of this district ?" Unhappily, he was not far off. A thin old man of sixty, and his son, who was about thirty, came trotting up, as their custom is, naked to their girdle, and stood before the king, who was by this time quite clothed again. What had struck the

old man's fancy I know not, but he passed my horse laughing, and seemingly wonderfully content with himself. The king asked if he was Shum of that place. He answered in the affirmative, and added, what was not asked of him, that the other was his son.

There is always near the king, when he marches, an officer called Kanitz Kitzera, the executioner of the camp. He has upon the tore of his saddle a quantity of thongs made of bull hide, rolled up very artificially, called the *tarade*. The king made a sign with his head, and another with his hand, without speaking. Two loops of the tarade were instantly thrown round the necks of the Shum and his son, and they were both hoisted upon the same tree, the tarade cut, and made fast to a branch. They were both left hanging, but, I thought, so awkwardly that they would not die for some minutes, and might surely have been saved had any one had the courage to cut them down ; but fear had fallen on all who had not attended the king to Tigré.

On the evening of the 23d came Sanuda, the treacherous councillor of Socinios. He was received with great marks of favour for the deceitful part he had acted. This man brought with him as prisoners, Guebra Denghel, the Ras's son-in-law, one of the most amiable men in Abyssinia, but who had unfortunately taken the wrong side ; and Sebaat Laab and Kefla Mariam, both men of great families in Tigré. These were, one after the other, thrown violently on their faces before the king, and then carried to Ras Michael, who ordered them to be loaded with irons.

About two hours later came Ayto Aylo, son of Kasmati Eshté, whom the king had named governor of Begemder ; he brought with him Chremation, brother to Socinios, and Abba ~*ama*, the Acah Saat, who had taken part with the usurper. I

had a great curiosity to see how they would treat the Acab Saat ; for I had read that churchmen were in this country exempt from the jurisdiction of the civil power. Accordingly, I went into the presence chamber, and took my place behind the king's chair. Very soon afterwards Aylo's men brought in their prisoners, and, as is usual, threw them down violently upon their faces on the ground.

The Acab Saat rose in a violent passion. He struggled to loosen his hands to perform the act of denouncing excommunication, which is by lifting the right hand, and extending the fore-finger. Finding that impossible, he cried out, "Unloose my hands, or you are all excommunicated." It was with difficulty he could be prevailed upon to hear the king, who with great composure, or rather indifference, said to him, "You are the first ecclesiastical officer in my household, you are the third in my whole kingdom ; but I have not yet learned you ever had power to curse your sovereign, or exhort his subjects to murder him. You are to be tried for this crime to-morrow ; so prepare to show, in your defence, upon what precepts of Christ or his apostles, or upon what part of the general councils you found your title to do this."

"Let my hands be unloosed," cried Salama, violently ; "I am a priest, a servant of God : and they have power, says David, to put kings in chains and nobles in irons. And did not Samuel hew king Agag in pieces before the Lord ? I excommunicate you, Tecla Haimanout !" He was going on, when Tecla Mariam, son of the king's secretary, a young man, struck him so violently on the face that it made his mouth gush with blood, saying at the same time, "What ! this in the king's presence ?" Upon this, both Chremation and the Acab Saat were hurried out of the tent, without being suffered to say more ; indeed, the blow seemed to

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sation—the law of Moses and the law of Christ. The Abyssinians were *Beni Israel*, that is, Children of Israel ; and in every age the patriarchs acted as he did. He then went roundly into the murder of King Joas, and charged Michael directly with that crime, as also with poisoning Hatzé Hannes, father of the present king.\*

The Ras pretended not to hear this, speaking carelessly to the people standing about him, or reading a paper. He asked me (I was immediately behind his chair), in a low voice, “What is the punishment in your country for such a crime?” I answered, “High treason is punished with death in all the countries I have ever known.” This I owed to Abba Salama, and it was not long before I had my return.

After speaking in reply to some of the other charges, the Acab Saat said that the Iteghé, with her brothers and Ayto Aylo, had all turned Franks ; that they had sent for priests, who lived with them in confidence, as that Frank did (pointing to me) ; that it was against the law of the country that I should be suffered here ; and that I was accursed, and ought to be stoned as an enemy to the Virgin Mary. There the Ras interrupted him by saying, “Confine yourself to your own defence ; clear yourself first, and then accuse any one you please. It is the king’s intention to put the law in execution against all offenders, and it is only as believing you the greatest that he has begun with you.”

This calmness of the Ras disconcerted Abba Salama, and, after an apology for the excommunication, to the effect that he had afterwards obviated its evil effects, and, indeed, been to some extent instrumental in procuring the return of the king and Michael to Gondar, he concluded with an appeal to the Ras and

\* See p. 115.

the judges not to order his eyes to be pulled out, or his tongue to be cut out, if they found him guilty,

The judges, one after another, gave it as their opinion, "He is guilty, and should die." Last of all, the king, by his officer, the Kal Hatzé, pronounced this sentence—"He is guilty, and shall die the death. The hangman shall hang him upon a tree to-day." The unfortunate Abba Salama was immediately hurried away to the place of execution, where, uttering curses to the last moment on the king and Michael, he was hanged in the very vestments in which he used to appear at religious and court solemnities.

Chremation, Socinios's brother, was next called, and, after a very summary examination, during which he seemed half dead with fear, he was sentenced to be hanged. The court then broke up, and went to breakfast ; for all this had passed in less than two hours, and it was not yet eleven o'clock. As I went home, I saw the two unfortunate people hanging upon the same branch.

Next morning came on the trial of Guebra Denghel, Sebaat Laab, and Kefla Mariam, whom the Ras claimed the right of trying at his own house, as they were all three subjects of his government of Tigré. Guebra Denghel, whose turn came first, bore his hard fortune with great unconcern, declaring that his only reason for taking up arms against the king was, that he saw no other way of preventing Michael's tyranny, and monstrous thirst of power. He wished the king to know that this was his only motive for rebellion, and that, unless it had been to make this declaration, he would not have opened his mouth before so unjust a judge as he knew Michael to be.

Wellela Selassé, his daughter, hearing the danger her father was in, broke suddenly out of Ozoro Esther's apartment, which was contiguous, and rushing into the council-room at the instant.



her father was condemned to die, she threw herself at the Ras's feet, with every mark and expression of the most extreme sorrow. The old tyrant spurned her away with his foot, and ordered her father to be immediately hanged. Wellela Selassé fell speechless to the ground. Her father, forgetful of his own situation, flew to her assistance, but they were dragged out at separate doors : the one to death, the other to after sufferings greater than death itself. Wellela Selassé put an end to her miseries some time afterwards, by swallowing poison. I saw her in her last moments, but too late to render her any assistance.

Kefla Mariam and Sebaat Laab were condemned—the former to have his eyes pulled out, and the latter to have his eyelids cut off by the roots. They were both exposed in the market place to the burning sun, without any covering whatever. Sebaat Laab died of a fever in a few days ; but Kefla Mariam lived, if not to see, at least to hear, that he was revenged, after the battle of Serbraxos, by the disgrace and captivity of Michael.

I will spare myself the disagreeable task of shocking my reader with any further account of these horrid cruelties. Blood continued to be spilt as water, day after day, till the Epiphany ; priests, laymen, young and old, noble and vile, daily found their end by the knife or the cord. Fifty-seven people died publicly by the hand of the executioner in the course of a very few days ; many disappeared, being either murdered privately, or sent to prison, no one knew where. The bodies of those killed by the sword, were hewn to pieces, and scattered about the streets. Hyenas came down in hundreds from the neighbouring mountains, to feed on the human carrion, and often, when returning home late from the palace, though attended by armed men with lanterns, I have heard them grunting by twos and threes, so near me

that I was afraid they might take some opportunity of seizing me by the leg. I carried pistols, but the town was already in too great a state of consternation for me to add to the fears of the people by discharging them in the night. I at last scarcely ever went out, and was continually meditating how I could best escape from this bloody country.

The king, missing me from the palace for some days, sent for me to come to him. He remarked that I was looking very ill, which was indeed the case, and inquired what ailed me, as, besides looking sick, I seemed as if something had put me out of humour. I mentioned some of the horrors I had just witnessed ; when I saw that it was all he could do to stifle a laugh, at grievances he thought very little of. "The men you saw suffer, on your way hither," said he, "were those that cut off the provisions from coming into the city ; they have occasioned the death of many poor people. As for the hyena, he never meddles living people ; he seeks carrion, and will soon clear the streets." I represented to him that it must be very pernicious to his health to allow the decaying bodies to hang so near his gate, and to lie unburied throughout the city.

"The Ras has given orders," said the king, gravely, "to remove all the dead bodies before the Epiphany, when we go down to keep that festival, and wash away all this pollution in the clear-running water of the Kahha. But tell me now, Yagoube, is it really possible that you can take such things as these so much to heart ? You are a brave man—we all know it ; and yet about these things you are as much affected as the most cowardly woman or child could be."

"Sir," said I, "I do not know whether I am brave or not ; but if to see men tortured, or murdered, or to live among dead ~~bodies~~

without concern, be courage, I have it not, nor desire to have it."

The conversation was going on, when Ras Michael was announced. As I was passing out, Michael said to me, "My son is ill ; Ozoro Esther has just sent to me, and complains that you visit her now no more. Go, see the boy, and don't neglect Ozoro Esther ; she is one of your best friends. She is at Koscam." I went home to plan my route to Sennaar, and to prepare letters for Hagi Belal, a merchant there, to whom I was recommended from Arabia Felix.

On the 31st of December, I went to Koscam. The next night, January 1st, 1771, I waited upon the king, who, after great dispute and altercation, permitted me to send my letters to Sennaar, arranging my return home that way. It was agreed that, as an immediate engagement between Ras Michael and Powussen and Gusho was inevitable, I should not attempt to depart till that affair was settled. The king insisted that I should take an oath, that, should he be victorious over, or reconciled to, the rebels, if the engagement I was under in my own country was not fulfilled, and I recovered my health, I should return with as many of my family as possible, with their horses, muskets, and bayonets. I cannot but hope, that the impossibility of performing this oath extinguished the sin of breaking it ; at any rate, it was personal, and the subsequent death of the king, of which I heard when I was at Sennaar, freed me from it.

While the king was at Kahha, keeping the festival of the Epiphany, he received a visit from Amha Yasous, son of the governor of Shoa, who came to offer his personal service and assistance to the king, and brought with him, as a present, 500 *ounces of gold*, and 1000 horsemen, fully equipped. The king

received him with great marks of distinction, giving him apartments in the palace, and a guard for his door. Amha Yasous had heard, while at Shoa, from some priests of Debra Libanos, that there was a strange white man in favour with the king at Gondar, who could do every thing but raise the dead ; and it was among his first requests to the king to be made acquainted with me. Soon we became almost inseparable companions. Our conversation one day turning upon the Abyssinian kings who lived at Shoa, he sent to that province, a distance of 300 miles, for a book containing their history, which was preserved in one of the churches. The acquisition of this book gave me great satisfaction. It was a fair and fine copy, written on parchment, in a large quarto size, in the pure ancient language of Geez, and contained the lives of the first kings who lived at Shoa.

On the 17th of February came messengers from Fasil, with the old language of proposals of submission and peace, and a repetition of his demand that Wellela Selassé should be given him in marriage, and sent to him, at least as far as Dingleber, where he would meet her. He excused himself from coming to Gondar, saying that the Ras had already broken his promise to him. Messengers arrived the same evening from Guscho and Powussen, declaring to Ras Michael, that if he did not leave Gondar, and return to Tigré (his own province), they would come and burn the town. They professed great duty to the king, but charged the Ras with every sort of enormity ; and upon his refusal to comply with their demands, sent him a defiance.

Gentle showers were now beginning to fall, betokening the approach of winter. A large army, under Guscho and Powussen, with some other leaders of less note, was ready to march, only waiting till the rain should make the Tacazzé impassable, and cut

off Michael's retreat to Tigré. Fasil alone kept them in suspense. With about 12,000 men he remained at Ibaba, professing to be at peace with Michael, meanwhile keeping all Maitsha quiet, and waiting for the coming of Welleta Yasous, and 20,000 Galla. Michael, on the other hand, by his excessive severity, had caused many of the people of consideration round Gondar to stand aloof from the king ; and, though they did not join the rebels, their absence had the worst effect upon the king's affairs. The execution of Guebra Denghel, and two other noblemen, moreover, had caused many of the old troops of Tigré to desert him. His army, however, was much strengthened by the arrival of Welleta Michael and Kefla Yasous, with 8000 picked men, many of them musketeers, and not having their equal in the army.

The rebels began to lay waste Dembea, burning the villages, to exasperate Michael, and draw him out of Gondar. At length they succeeded. Michael determined to march out, and risk all upon the fortune of a battle. Accordingly, on the 13th of May, he marched out of Gondar, taking with him the king, the Abuna, Ozoro Esther, Ozoro Altash, and all the other ladies of the court. The army, in round numbers, consisted of 40,000 men. Of these 7500 were horsemen, and nearly 7000 musketeers. The army was furnished with a number of excellent officers, who had spent their whole lives in war ; and Ras Michael their commander, now seventy-four years of age, had passed the last fifty years of his life in a succession of victories.

It is impossible to state with exactness the number of the enemy, which was variously stated at from 30,000 to 60,000 men ; but I believe the former figure to be nearest the truth. The king's army was in a very undisciplined state. We were *often all in confusion* ; all our officers had left their command,

and were crowding round Ras Michael and the king ; women bearing provisions, horns of liquor, and mills for grinding corn, upon their backs ; idle women of all sorts, half dead with fear, crying and roaring, mounted upon mules ; and men driving mules loaded with baggage, mingled with the troops, and passing through in all directions, presented such a tumultuous appearance, that it surpassed all description. There were about 10,000 women accompanying the army ; the Ras had about fifty loaded with bouza, and the king, I suppose, nearly as many.

The sight threw me for a moment into low spirits. I know not if the king saw it. I was perfectly silent, when he cried, " Well, what do you say to us now, Yagoube ? " I answered, " Is this the order in which your majesty means to engage ? " He laughed, and said, " Aye, why not ? " " If that is so," I replied, " I only hope it is the enemy's custom, as well as your majesty's, to be in no better order." A slight engagement ensued, in which Ayto Confu, who had, contrary to orders, vigorously charged a body of the enemy's cavalry under Woodage Asahel, was severely wounded. Notwithstanding the natural hardness of his heart, Ras Michael showed great sensibility on hearing that Confu was wounded. He came to see him, and gave him a slighter reproof than was expected for leaving his post, and fighting without orders. Ozoro Esther was in the deepest concern about her son, and asked repeatedly, with great anxiety, if I thought it possible he could recover. Both she and the Ras entreated me to accompany him back to Gondar, and attend to his wound. Accordingly I ordered a litter to be prepared, and, placing my patient in it, at once set out. We reached Koscam without any adventure. Having made the necessary arrangements for the care of Confu, whom I could leave without anxiety, I returned to the camp.

Michael advanced rapidly towards Begemder, knowing that there he would have the support of many powerful noblemen, friends to the king, who had stood aloof from Powussen. We had reached the hill of Serbraxos, where we took up a strong position. Powussen made a furious attack upon the Ras, who at one time was in some personal danger. After a severe struggle, Powussen was compelled to retreat, leaving 900 of his best men on the field. Our loss was rather more than 300. This was the first battle of Serbraxos, fought on the 16th of May 1771. Though not decisive, it served so to daunt the spirits of the Begemder horse, that many chiefs of that country withdrew their troops and went home. Discord, too, sprung up between the leaders ; and, I believe, they never sincerely trusted one another afterwards.

The day after the battle, messengers arrived from Gusho and Powussen, desiring to continue in allegiance to the king, on condition that Ras Michael should be sent to his government of Tigré, never to return. Fear, or gratitude, or both, restrained the young king from complying with their demands ; whereupon the messengers said that he must now abide the consequences, as they had done all in their power to save him.

On the 19th of May, the whole, rebel army was in motion, and drew up, offering us battle in the plain. The king's army accepted the challenge at once and descended to meet them. Just when the engagement was about to begin, a violent storm of thunder, lightning, and rain, came on ; when the troops on both sides retired to their tents. The evening was spent in festivity in our camp, for the Ras spared nothing that would refresh his troops, and prepare them for the battle of the following day. All *the young nobility* were, as usual, at Ozoro Esther's. It was with

infinite pity I heard them thoughtlessly praying for a fair day to-morrow, the evening of which many of them were never to see.

Next morning our troops resumed their former position, fully half an hour before the enemy was in motion. A great cloud of dust was raised by the Begemder horse, which increased as they advanced, taking strange shapes, which the fancy made into towers, castles, and battlements. In the middle of this great cloud, we began to perceive indistinctly the figures of the mounted soldiers coming majestically upon us. The whole made a most extraordinary, but truly picturesque appearance.

It is needless to describe all the particulars of this second battle of Serbraxos. It was fought with great obstinacy on both sides. The king's troops fell back on the hill of Serbraxos, before Gusho ; but on the right the rebels were forced to retire behind the river Mogetch, where they posted themselves in so strong a position that it was not thought advisable to make any further attack on them. Nearly 3000 men perished on the king's side, among them nearly 180 young men of the best families in the kingdom. The enemy lost more than 9000 men, including various persons of distinction.

The king after dinner received a compliment from Ras Michael, who sent him a present of fruit and a thousand ounces of gold. Then began one of the most barbarous ceremonies that ever disgraced any nation calling itself Christian. Each soldier who had killed an enemy, appeared before his chief, armed as in fight, with a part of the body of the man he had slain hanging upon the wrist of his right hand ; and after uttering a species of rant in praise of his own bravery, he threw down the bloody trophy before his superior. I believe there was a heap of above 400 that day before OZORS



Esther. I daresay she wondered that I had no compliment of the kind to pay her!

For my own part, tired to death, low in spirits, and cursing the hour that brought me to such a country, I almost regretted I had not died that day on the field of Serbraxos. I went to bed, refusing to go to Ozoro Esther, who had sent for me. I could not help lamenting how well my apprehensions had been verified, that some of our companions at last night's supper, so anxious for the appearance of morning, should never see its evening. Four of them, all young men, and of great hopes, were then lying dead and mangled on the field; two others, besides Engedan, had been wounded. I had, however, a sound and refreshing sleep. I think madness would have been the consequence, if this necessary refreshment had failed me; such was the horror I had conceived of my present situation.

Next morning I received an order from the Ras to attend him. I was ushered into the presence of the king, who put a large chain of massive gold over my neck, the secretary saying, "Yagoube, the king does you this great honour, not as payment of past services, but as a pledge that he will reward them if you will put it in his power." (I had been in command of a troop of heavy cavalry, and had done some service in the engagement.) I kissed the ground before his majesty, and retired.

The chain consisted of 184 links, each weighing  $3\frac{1}{2}$  dwts. of fine gold. It was with the utmost reluctance that, being in want of everything, I sold great part of this honourable distinction at Sennaar, on my way home; the remaining portion is still in my possession. It is to be hoped my successors will never have the same excuse I had for further diminishing this *honourable monument*.

Serbraxos was the scene of a third battle on the 23d of May. Few men fell on either side, and the result was still less decisive than that of either of the previous contests. Several days after, intelligence reached the king's camp that the Edjow Galla had been massacring all the people they met on the way to and from Gondar, and that a party of troops had entered the city, threatening to set it on fire if any more provisions were sent to us. It was resolved, accordingly, to return to Gondar on the following day—a resolution that evidently gave universal satisfaction. A confusion never to be forgotten ensued. The descent of the hill had become very slippery, and men, horses, and mules rolled promiscuously over each other. We had reached the plain where the road was as smooth as a carpet, when Ras Michael's mule fell, and threw him on his face in a puddle of water. He was quickly picked up unhurt, and mounted on his mule again. We passed the Mogetch, and at about 200 yards from the bridge, on equally plain ground, the mule fell again, throwing the Ras a second time in the dirt, on which a general murmur and groan was heard from all his attendants, for everybody interpreted the accidents as an omen that Michael's power and fortune were gone from him for ever. I could not help reflecting how justly the Ras was now punished for the murder of the singers on that very spot. On reaching Gondar, the king went direct to the palace, now quite deserted, and the Ras to his own house. By the secretary's advice, I went to the house of the Abuna, where I had that night a sound and refreshing sleep.

The following morning Gondar was completely invested by Gusho, who knew that he could not ruin Michael so effectually as by blockading him in the capital, amidst a multitude of enemies, before he had time to secure the necessary resources.

The same day proclamation was made that all soldiers of the province of Tigré, or who had borne arms under Ras Michael, should, on the morrow before mid-day, bring their arms, and deliver them up at an appointed place ; with further intimation that, if arms were found in any house after noon of the day of proclamation, the owner of them would be put to death, and the house razed to its foundation.

The troops under Guebra Mascal were the first to obey the proclamation. Their leader brought to the place appointed about 6000 muskets, belonging to the Ras and his family. All the rest of the principal officers followed ; and, within the time allowed for giving them up, all the arms in the city were surrendered.

The Ras continued in the house belonging to his office, eating, drinking, and sleeping as usual, and reasoning on what had happened with great equanimity and seeming indifference. When he heard how ill his disarmed troops had been used by the populace, his firmness gave way. He burst into tears, exclaiming, " Had I died before this, I had been happy ! "

The king behaved with the greatest firmness and composure ; he was indeed graver than usual, and talked less, but was not at all dejected. Scarcely anybody came near him for the first day or two, except the priests, and some of the judges and old inhabitants of the town. While he was thus comparatively deserted, a body of Galla belonging to Maitsha stole privately into Gondar, and, after plundering several houses, entered the palace. The king was sitting in his presence chamber with no attendants but myself and two of his servants, when these barbarians entered it. The room, in the days of the luxury and splendour of the Abyssinian court, had been magnificently hung with mirrors, brought *at great expense* from Venice. The Galla immediately com-

menced smashing the mirrors ; and I was in fear lest they should take it into their heads to murder us all, to which we could have offered little resistance, having no arms except the short knives usually worn in the girdle. The savages had nearly finished with the mirrors, when about a hundred stout young men of Gondar, well armed, opportunely made their appearance. The Galla were obliged to surrender, and were sent, bound, to Gusho's camp, where two of them were hanged, and the rest well whipped.

On the 1st of June, Gusho and Powussen came both to the house of the Ras, where they interrogated him very roughly as to all his past conduct. He was clothed in white, with a cowl of the same colour on his head, a sign that he had retired from public life. Nothing remarkable happened at this interview, so far as is known. Gusho and Powussen afterwards went to the king's palace, where, after they had taken the oaths of allegiance, it was resolved that Gusho should be Ras. Three days afterwards Michael was removed by Powussen to Begemder, and Gusho took possession of his house, as well as his office.\* Fasil

\* As this is the last mention of Ras Michael in these pages, it may be proper here to inform the reader that he died in 1780, in the eighty-eighth year of his age. "The following anecdotes," says Mr. Salt, "respecting this extraordinary man may prove acceptable to every reader who admires the very ably drawn character given of him by Mr. Bruce. On one occasion, when playing at chess, he hastily made out an order for five thousand dollars to be given to a chief for some service he had performed, instead of five hundred, which was the usual allowance : and, on the circumstance being mentioned to him by his steward, he turned round quickly, and answered, 'I have said it ; let it be so—the angel Michael hath sent it to him.'—A chief of some note having confessed to a priest that he had committed a murder, the latter, in hopes of receiving a reward, disclosed it to the relations, and, in consequence, the former was seized and taken before Ras Michael. 'What is the evidence ?' said the Ras. The priest stepped forward, and declared that he had repeatedly

meanwhile kept an armed neutrality, expressing neither approbation nor disapprobation of what had been done. He came, at the end of June, on a visit to the king, whom he requested to appoint certain of his own servants to posts of importance. The wish of such a powerful man was equivalent to a command, and the king felt constrained to comply.

Gusho's administration was very corrupt. He bestowed public offices on those who were willing to pay the highest prices for them, and extorted money from people who had crimes, real or alleged, to compound for. These and similar measures produced a reaction. The king, who had no love for his prime minister, fomented the spirit of dissatisfaction, and at length gave orders that he should be arrested. This was accordingly done ; and, before he had been two months in power, Gusho was consigned, loaded with chains, to a high, damp tower in the king's house.

Yet Gusho was not without friends in his adversity. On the 6th of August, messengers came from Fasil, and the day after from Powussen, with deputies from the provinces of Begemder, Gojam, Damot, and Maitsha, all desiring that Gusho should be set at liberty. The king agreed, on condition that Gusho should confessed the fact to him. Ras Michael, without hesitation, gave the order, 'Take him to his death.' The relations immediately laid hold of the chief, and were in the act of forcing him away, when the old man, with one of his terrible looks, cried out, 'Not that man, but the priest, who has dared to reveal the secrets disclosed to him in confession ;' and he was instantly led out to execution. Ras Michael had so poor an opinion of what the priests could do for a man in his last moments, that he said, when on his death-bed, 'Let not a priest come near me : if a man cannot make up his own account, how shall weak men like these do it for him ?'—*Salt's Voyage to Abyssinia* (London, 1814), p. 326.

instantly pay him 1000 ounces of gold, and 500 muskets. This was positively refused; whereupon Gusho was loaded with heavier irons than before, and kept in close confinement. Fasil marched upon Gondar, destroying the villages near it, and putting men, women, and children to the sword. He sent a crooked, diminutive dwarf to the king, repeating his demand of the liberation of Gusho. The king again refused; but, on the city being deserted at the approach of Fasil, he was forced to yield. Gusho was set free on the 15th of August, and immediately went to the camp of Fasil. On the 17th, Fasil had an audience of the king, whom he informed that he had given Gusho his daughter in marriage. The king thereupon restored to Gusho the province of Amhara, of which he had recently deprived him, and gave him Gojam in addition. Fasil, at the same interview, obtained for himself Damot, Maitsha, and Agow. For the greater solemnity, the king and Fasil took an oath to ratify all these articles, and to remain in friendship for ever. The Abuna, in full canonicals, was called in to pronounce a formal curse and excommunication on the party who should first break the vow thus taken.

It is here a proper period to finish the history of Abyssinia, as I was no further present at, or informed of, the public transactions which followed. My whole attention was now taken up with preparations for my return through the kingdom of Sennaar and the desert. Neither shall I take up the reader's time with a long narrative of leave-taking, or what passed between me and those illustrious personages with whom I had lived so long in the most perfect and cordial friendship. Men of little and envious minds would perhaps think I was composing a panegyric upon myself; therefore I most willingly refrain. But the several marks of goodness, friendship, and esteem, which I received at parting, are

confined within my own breast, where they never shall be effaced, but shall continue to furnish me with the most agreeable reflections, since they were the fruit alone of personal merit, and of honest, steady, and upright behaviour. All who had attempted the same journey hitherto had met with disappointment, disgrace, or death ; for my part, although I underwent every sort of toil, danger, and hardship, yet these were not confined to myself. I suffered always honourably, and in common with the rest of the state ; and when sunshiny days happened (for sunshiny days there were, and many brilliant ones, too), of these I was permitted freely to partake, and the most distinguished characters, both at court and in the army, were always ready to contribute, as far as possible, to promote what they thought or saw was the object of my pursuits or entertainment.

I shall only here mention what passed at the last interview I had with the Iteghé, two days before my departure. Tensa Christos, one of the chief priests of Gondar, and a great enemy of "the religion of the Franks," was at Koscam when I went to bid her farewell. He asked me if I was a Frank ; and, on my informing him that I was not, he proceeded to put a number of other questions to me regarding my religion, and the reasons I had for preferring it to his. After a conversation of some length, which need not be here repeated, I got up and stood by Tensa Christos, saying to him, "And now, holy father, I have one last favour to ask you—which is your forgiveness, if I have at any time offended you ; your blessing, now that I am immediately to depart ; and your prayers, while on my long and dangerous journey through countries of Infidels and Pagans."

A hum of applause sounded through the room. The Iteghé *said something*, but what, I did not hear. Tensa Christos was

surprised at my humility, and cried out, with tears in his eyes, "Is it possible, Yagoube, that you believe my prayers can do you any good?" "I should not be a Christian, as I profess to be, father," said I, "if I had any doubt of the effect of good men's prayers." So saying, I stooped to kiss his hand, when he laid a small iron cross on my head, and, to my great surprise, instead of a benediction, repeated the Lord's Prayer. He concluded, "*Gzier y' Baracuc*"—May God bless you. After which I made my obeisance to the Iteghé, and immediately withdrew—it not being the custom, at public audience, to salute any one in the presence of the sovereign.

Twenty greasy monks, however, had placed themselves in my way as I went out, that they might have the credit of giving me the blessing likewise, after Tensa Christos. As I had very little faith in the prayers of these drones, so I had some reluctance to kiss their greasy hands and sleeves. However, in running this disagreeable gauntlet, I gave them my blessing in English—"Lord, send you all a halter, as he did to Abba Salama" (meaning the Acab Saat). But they, thinking I was recommending them to the Patriarch Abba Salama, pronounced, with great seeming devotion, their "Amen : so be it!"



## CHAPTER XV.

*From Gondar to Sennaar—Unexpected meeting with Ozoro Esther at Tcherkin—Elephant hunting—Ammonios and the Buffalo—Interview with Gimbaro, the Shangalla Chief—The Valley of the Shadow of Death—I bid farewell to Yasine—Effects of the Simoom—A Good Shot—A Deserted Village—Arrival at Teawa—Outrageous conduct of the Shekh Fidele—A useful Eclipse—Hospitably received at Beyla—Villages of the Nuba—A Whirlwind—Basboch, a ferry of the Nile—I shoot a Crocodile—Arrival at Sennaar.*

ON the 26th of September 1771, after many delays, I left Gondar, on my way to Sennaar. Three Greeks, one of whom only was my servant, and several common men, who took charge of the beasts, and were to go no farther than Tcherkin, were my only companions. I stayed at Koscam the whole of the following day, and, early on the morning of the 28th, set out on this long and weary journey.

We were entering a thick wood, about four in the afternoon, when we were surrounded by a multitude of men, armed with lances, shields, slings, and large clubs, who threw a shower of stones at us. They were too far off to do us any harm ; but I ordered a couple of shots to be fired over their heads, to induce them to keep a respectful distance. This had the desired effect, *as they retreated* to a hill farther off, where they continued

whooping, shouting, and making signs. We pitched our tent on the plain below two of the villages inhabited by these people, to whom I sent a message, that, if they annoyed us any more, we would destroy their houses and put them all to the sword. They returned a submissive answer, with a multitude of lies in excuse of what they called their mistake. This was the only annoyance we met with on the way to Tcherkin, where we arrived five days afterwards. I had been met, the day before I reached the town, by a man whom I had frequently seen at Koscam, and who said he was a servant of Ayto Confu. He wished me to hurry on before to meet his master, who was coming to Tcherkin that day ; but I adhered to the rule I had laid down for myself, never to separate myself on the road from my servants and company.

On the 2d of January 1772, I pitched my tent in the market-place at Tcherkin, which seemed a beautiful lawn laid out for pleasure, shaded with fine old trees of an enormous height and size, and watered by a small but very limpid brook, running over pebbles as white as snow. The man who gave himself out to me as Confu's servant would only allow me time to see my quadrant and other instruments safely stowed, before he hurried me to Ayto Confu's house, which was built, in a strong position, on a steep hill. On my arrival I found that a joyful surprise had been planned for me. I was ushered into an inner apartment ; and there, instead of Ayto Confu, I saw his mother Ozoro Esther, sitting on a couch, and at her feet the secretary's daughter, the beautiful Tecla Mariam.

"Ozoro Esther!" exclaimed I, after a profound obeisance, "I cannot speak for surprise. Why have you left Gondar to come into this wilderness? As for Tecla Mariam, I am not

surprised at seeing her : I know she would rather die than leave you ; but that you have both come hither without Ayto Confu, and in so short a time, is what I cannot comprehend."

"There is nothing so strange in this," replied Ozoro Esther : "the troops of Begemder have taken away my husband, God knows where ; and therefore, being now a single woman, I am resolved to go to Jerusalem, to pray for him, and to die there, and be buried in the Holy Sepulchre. You would not stay with us, so we are going with you !"

"But tell me truly," said Tecla Mariam, "you that know everything by peeping and poring through those long glasses—did you not learn by the stars that we were to meet you here ?"

"Madam," answered I, "if there was one star in the firmament that had announced to me such agreeable news, I should have relapsed into the old idolatry of this country, and worshipped that star for the rest of my life."

Breakfast now appeared, and the conversation took a very lively turn. The secretary and several other persons belonging to the court were present ; and in the afternoon Confu arrived, with a large company. I ascertained that the king, out of gratitude to the old Ras, had bestowed several villages upon Ozoro Esther, and that her son had come to put her in possession. I confess this to have been one of the happiest moments of my life. I quite forgot the difficult and dangerous journey before me, and began even to regret being so far on my way to leave Abyssinia for ever.

There is great plenty of game of every sort about Tcherkin—elephants, rhinoceroses, buffaloes, etc. Though we were all happy to our wish in this enchanted mountain, the active spirit of *Ayto Confu* could not rest : he had come to hunt the elephant,

and hunt him he would. Accordingly, on the 6th, an hour before daybreak, we mounted on horseback, to the number of thirty, intent on having this sport. We were attended by a number of people who make hunting the elephant their particular business. These men dwell constantly in the woods, subsisting entirely on the flesh of the animals they kill. They are thin, slight, and agile, of a swarthy complexion, but with European features. They are called Agageer, from their profession, the name being derived from the word *agar*, to hamstring.

The manner in which the Agageer kill the elephant is as follows :—Two men, absolutely naked, mount a single horse ; one manages the horse, while the other, who is armed with a broad sword, sits behind him. As soon as the elephant is discovered, they ride before him, as near his face as possible, crossing him in all directions, and shouting, “I am such a man, and such a man ; this is my horse, that has such a name ; I killed your father in such a place, and your grandfather in such another place, and now I am come to kill you, who are but an ass in comparison to them !” This nonsense they believe to be understood by the elephant, who, irritated at the noise immediately before him, rushes at the horse, trying to seize him with his trunk. After having made him turn several times in pursuit of the horse, the man who guides the horse contrives to drop his companion behind the elephant ; and while the attention of the infuriated animal is occupied by the horse, the swordsman accomplishes the hazardous task of severing his tendon above the heel of the hind leg. The horseman immediately wheels round, and picks up his comrade as nimbly as possible. It is impossible for the elephant now to escape ; and they can go

after others of the herd, returning afterwards to kill him with javelins and lances.

This amusement is attended with great danger, from the broken stumps of trees and the deep fissures in the soil in the dry season. The elephant sometimes gets hold of both horse and rider, by an accident arising from these or other causes, and tears them limb from limb.

The flesh of the elephant is cut into thongs, and hung on the branches of trees to dry. It is then stored up for use in the rainy season.

Our attendant Agageers succeeded in killing several elephants in the manner above described. The last was a female elephant, with a calf. When she was lamed by the Agageers, and then assailed by their darts, the young one, which had been suffered to escape, rushed out of the thicket, apparently in great anger, and assaulted the horses and men with all the violence it was master of. I was amazed and afflicted at seeing the great affection of the little creature for its wounded mother. I cried to the Agageers to spare the mother, but it was too late. The calf shared its mother's fate; for one of the hunters, being a little hurt by it in one of its attacks, thrust it through with his lance.

Next day we again went upon a hunting excursion. We had killed a rhinoceros and several wild boars, and were on our way home, when Ammonios, the chamberlain, who was of the party, had a somewhat laughable adventure with a buffalo. Whether the buffalo found Ammonios, or Ammonios the buffalo, is what we could never get him to explain to us; but he had wounded the beast slightly in the buttock, and it in turn had gored his horse, throwing both him and it to the ground. The buffalo left off goring the horse, and followed Ammonios, the

moment it saw him rise and run. Ammonios got behind one large tree, and then ran from that to another still larger, the buffalo keeping close in pursuit. Ayto Engedan, who was near, instead of running to the chamberlain's assistance, looked as if he would die of laughing at the droll figure which he cut, running and skipping about naked (for he had dropped his cloak), with a swiftness he had never displayed all his life before.

The moment I heard the shouts of Engedan, who was calling on Confu to come and partake of the diversion, I galloped up to the place, and could not help laughing at the ridiculous figure of our friend, who was very attentive to the motions of the beast, which seemed to dodge with great address, and keep to his adversary with the utmost obstinacy. As soon as Engedan saw me, he cried, "Yagoube, for the love of the blessed Virgin, don't interfere till Confu comes up!" Confu immediately arrived, and laughed more than Engedan, but did not offer to interfere, clapping his hands, and crying, "Well done, Ammonios!" The unfortunate Ammonios had been driven from tree to tree, till he had got behind one, within a few yards of a large pool. Nothing could be more ridiculous than to see him holding the tree with both hands, peeping first one way, and then the other, to see how the beast would turn. And much need he had to be on his guard, for the animal was absolutely mad. Afraid lest the joke might have an ugly termination, I set my horse to full speed, and ran a spear through the body of the brute, at the same time calling to Ammonios to throw himself into the water. Our friend accordingly quitted the tree, dashed through the intervening bushes, and threw himself into the river. But here occurred a new danger, which I had not foreseen. The pool was very deep, and Ammonios could not swim! Thus, though he

escaped the buffalo, he would probably have been drowned, had he not caught hold of some strong roots of a tree shooting out of the bank. There he lay, in perfect safety from his enemy, till our servants helped him out. The buffalo, meanwhile, was dispatched ; and Ayto Confu took its immense head and horns to hang up in his great hall, putting this inscription on the trophy, in his own language, "Yagoube the Kipt killed this upon the Bedowi."

Till the 15th of January I remained with Ozoro Esther and her company, the time being spent in mirth and festivity. During my stay some men arrived from Ras el Feel, sent by Yasine, with camels for our baggage, nothing but mules being used at Tcherkin. On the morning of the 15th I took my final farewell of the beautiful and amiable Ozoro Esther, who was to return the following day to Gondar. The road was difficult, and, as our camels were heavily loaded, we proceeded but slowly. On the 17th we reached Sancaho, an old frontier territory, and encamped near the town, which consists of about 300 huts or houses, neatly built of canes, and curiously thatched with leaves of the same plant. The inhabitants are a race of Shangalla, and the government is absolute, but understood to be subject to that of Ras el Feel. I sent one of Yasine's men to request provisions for ourselves and our camels, and also to ask for two camels, as those I had were too few to carry my baggage. He brought back with him a woolly-headed black, the son of the chief, who said, very pertly, "My father salutes you ; if you can eat what he eats, you shall be very welcome." I asked what that was. "Elephant, killed yesterday," was the reply ; "and as for camels, he tells you he has none ; elephants are his camels, and rhinoceroses are his mules." Arming myself with a pair of

pistols and a fusil and bayonet, and attended by two servants, each carrying a blunderbuss, I ascended the hill on which the town is built, to expostulate with the Erbab, or chief, whose name was Gimbaro. I found him in an apartment about fifty feet long, all hung round with elephants' heads and trunks, with skulls of the rhinoceros, hippopotamus, and giraffe. Lion's skins were spread on several parts of the floor ; and at the end of the room, with nothing in the way of dress except a small cloth about his middle, stood Gimbaro, the largest man I ever remember to have seen, perfectly black, flat-nosed, thick-lipped, and woolly-headed—a perfect picture of those cannibal giants that we read of as inhabiting enchanted castles in fairy tales.

Gimbaro took scarcely any notice of me on my entering the room, but when I came near him, he stepped forward awkwardly, bowed, and attempted to kiss my hand. I drew it away, saying in a firm voice, "I apprehend, sir, you do not know me." He bowed, and said he did, but that he did not at first know that it was I who was encamped by the brook. The interview concluded with his furnishing me with what I wanted, and my engaging to make no complaint regarding his conduct. Gimbaro breakfasted with us next morning, and, to confirm the friendship, drank several glasses of strong spirits, which put him into excellent humour. I gave a small present to his son, and we parted on the best terms.

On the following day, our beasts were kept constantly in a state of great terror by a lion prowling near us. As there seemed to be but one remedy for the difficulty, I took a long Turkish rifle, and crawling under a bank to get as near as possible, I shot it in the body, and it fell dead, even without any muscular motion.

On the 20th we reached Hor Cacamoot, a part of Yasine'



government of Ras el Feel. Hor Cacamoot means the Valley of the Shadow of Death—a bad omen for weak and wandering travellers as we were, surrounded by a multitude of dangers, and so far from home, that there seemed to be but One that could bring us thither. We trusted in Him, and He did deliver us.

Some time before I left Gondar, I had been threatened with an attack of dysentery. At Hor Cacamoot it grew worse, and had many unpromising symptoms ; but I was cured there by the advice and assistance of a common Shangalla, by means of a shrub called Wooginoos, very common in those parts.

Yasine had done everything in his power to secure me a good reception from Fidele, Shekh of Atbara, through whose territories I had to pass. Mahomet, Shekh of Beyla, a man of high character for courage and probity, had received from me, through Yasine, medicines that greatly relieved a painful disorder under which he laboured. I now wrote to him, to bespeak his good offices in forwarding my servant to Sennaar. Having thus taken every measure of precaution in my power, I left Hor Cacamoot on the 17th of March, and proceeded on my journey. On the following day I took an affectionate leave of my friend Yasine, who showed at parting that love and attachment he had constantly preserved for me since our first acquaintance.

For several days we advanced without meeting with any adventure, except an attack by a lion and several hyenas, which carried off an ass, and wounded one of my attendants. We had refrained from using our fire-arms, from the fear of attracting the notice of any banditti that might be within hearing ; but we were forced now to employ them, and my servants discharged two ship-blunderbusses, each loaded with about fifty small *bullets*, which presently freed us from our troublesome guests.

Two hyenas were killed ; and a lion, which was mortally wounded, was despatched by our men in the morning.

Rashid, which we reached on the 20th, has seven or eight wells of good water. The place itself is beautiful beyond description. It is a fairy land in the middle of an inhospitable, uninhabited desert ; full of large wide-spreading trees, loaded with flowers and fruit ; and abounding in deer. We were just two hours in coming to Rashid from our last halting place, for we were flying for our lives. The Simoom, or hot wind, had struck us not long after setting out, and our little company, all but myself, fell mortally sick with the quantity of poisonous vapour that they had imbibed. The distance we had travelled was only five miles, and Rashid is one of the most dangerous halting places between Ras el Feel and Sennaar ; yet we were so enervated, our stomachs so weak, and our headaches so violent, that we could not pitch our tent, but each, wrapping himself in his cloak, resigned himself immediately to sleep, under the cool shade of the large trees. While we were in this helpless state, a Ganjar Arab, who drove an ass laden with salt, took the opportunity of stealing one of the mules, and got off safely with his booty, we being too weak and discouraged to pursue him. Having refreshed ourselves with a little sleep, the next thing we did was to fill our girbas, or water-skins. Next day we travelled for about five hours, though, from the weak state we were in, I do not think we advanced more than seven or eight miles. The mules, camels, and horses appeared to be as much affected by the simoom as we were. They drank repeatedly and copiously, but experienced no apparent benefit from it.

At a pool of water on our way this day, I discovered a crowd of hyenas devouring the carcass of a deer. I seized a ship-blun

derbuss, loaded with about forty small bullets, and crept cautiously forward, to get as near them as possible without being observed. They noticed me, raising the bristles on their backs and giving a short but terrible grunt. They, however, fell to their prey again, as if they meant to finish it first and then come and settle matters with me. Having reached as favourable a position as I could wish, I levelled my blunderbuss at the middle of the group, and fired. Two of them fell dead on the spot; two more died about twenty yards' distance; and the rest fled without looking back or showing any kind of resentment.

We found here some traps set for birds, a sure proof that the Arabs were not far off. Not a little alarmed at this, we resumed our journey the same evening. After travelling for four hours we lost our way, and were obliged to halt in a wood. Here we were terrified to find that our water was entirely gone, probably by evaporation. A general murmur of fear and discontent prevailed through our whole company, for we had no knowledge of the situation of the next well.

We set out again the following morning in great despondency; and were fortunate enough to regain our road. Shortly afterwards we reached Ingellalib, where we found plenty of water. Every one pressed forward to drink, and the effects of this hurry were soon seen; for two Abyssinian Moors died immediately after drinking.

Having rested at this well for two hours, and covered the bodies of our unfortunate companions with sand, we resumed our journey, and in the evening encamped at the village of Garigana, whose inhabitants had all perished of hunger the year before. Their bones lay bleaching all around us, on the site of the *deserted village*. Full of horror at this miserable spectacle, we set

out early next morning for Teawa, the principal village of Atbara, and the residence of Shekh Fidele.

About seven in the evening, when we were about a quarter of a mile from Teawa, we were met by a man on horseback, clothed in a large, loose gown of red camlet, with a white muslin turban on his head, attended by about twenty naked servants on foot, carrying lances, and preceded by two small drums and a pipe. He was about seventy, with a very long beard, and of a graceful appearance. We saluted each other very courteously; and he then conducted me into the town. We passed a very commodious house, where he ordered my servants to unload my baggage, that being the residence assigned to me by the Shekh. He and I, with Soliman, one of my servants, walking by the side of my mule, crossed an open space of about 500 yards, where the market is kept, to the Shekh's house, or rather collection of houses, one storey high, and built with canes. We entered a large hall of unburnt bricks, covered with straw mats. In the middle of it there was a chair, to which obeisance is made, it being considered as the seat of the Grand Seignior. The Shekh himself was sitting on the ground in affected humility, pretending to be reading the Koran. On our entry he looked up as if in surprise, and made a motion, as if he were going to rise, but I prevented him, holding him down by the hand which I kissed. I shall not fatigue the reader with the uninteresting conversation that passed at this first interview. On my rising to go away, he got up, and holding me by the hand said, "The greatest part of the dangers you have passed in the way, are, I believe, as yet unknown to you. Your Moor, Yasine, of Ras el Feel, is a thief worse than any in Habesh. Several times you escaped very narrowly by mere chance from being cut off by Arabs whom Yasine had

posted to murder you. But you have a clean heart and clean hands. God saw their designs and protected you ; and I, for my part, was not wanting." Being then on my legs for retiring, I returned no answer but the usual one, "Ullah Kerim ! God is merciful !" Soliman, on the other side, echoed *Ullah Kerim !* by which I saw he understood me.

We had scarcely taken possession of our lodging when several slaves of both sexes appeared with dishes of meat from the Shekh, accompanied with many flattering compliments. The whole was consumed very speedily. I was much astonished at one of the young men, who, putting his mouth close to my ear, whispered these few words in Arabic, "Seitan Fidele ! el Shekh el Atbara Seitan !" (Fidele is a devil ! the Shekh of Atbara is the devil himself !)

This warning induced me to hold a council with my followers, to consider what was to be done. We all agreed that we were in danger, and resolved to despatch a messenger to Ras el Feel, asking Yasmine to send some person, as from the king, or Ayto Confu, to remonstrate against our detention, and to be a witness of the Shekh's behaviour and our departure. In the meantime, we determined to make our interviews with him as few as possible.

On the 25th, I waited on the Shekh with a present, consisting of a large piece of blue Indian cotton cloth, with gold flowers, a silk and cotton sash, and a quantity of civet, nutmegs, and pepper. He received these things very graciously. I told him I was anxious to depart, and asked him to get me camels. He answered that the camels were fifteen days' journey away in the desert for fear of the flies, and added that the road to Sennaar was very unsafe just *then*. After some altercation with Soliman, he concluded, "Stay

this week, and, if my camels do not arrive, I will send and take them from the Arabs, wherever they can be found." He said this with such an air of sincerity, that it was impossible to doubt him.

We were detained at Teawa much longer than the time Fidele named. During my stay I acted as physician to the Shekh, his wives, and his beautiful daughter Aiscach, whom he offered me in marriage on condition that I should settle down as second governor of Atbara! It was not long before the reason why Fidele was so unwilling to let me out of his hands was plainly enough stated by himself. He recommended my servant Soliman to persuade me to give him 2000 piastres, without which he swore he would never suffer me to go alive out of Atbara. Soliman assured him that I set no value on money, and had none with me, otherwise I would not refuse what he desired; and that all I had was brass, iron, and glass bottles, of no value to anybody but myself. Fidele ordered him at parting to tell me that he expected me the following evening. This conversation took place on the 9th of April.

Next day, at the appointed hour, I waited upon the Shekh. I resolved to go armed for fear of the worst. I had a small Brescian blunderbuss, about 22 inches in the barrel, which had a joint in the stock, so that it folded double. It hung under my left arm, close to my side, like a cutlass, and was completely concealed, as were also the pistols in my belt by my cloak. I took with me also Hagi Ismael, the Turk, Soliman, my servant, and two other Moors, well armed, leaving them at the outer door.

Fidele was sitting in a spacious room in an alcove on a broad sofa like a bed. I saw he either was or affected to be drunk. Which ever might be the case, I knew it would lead to mischief.

and I repented having come into the house alone. After he had taken two whiffs of his pipe, he said "Are you prepared? Have you brought the needful with you?"

"My servants are at the outer door," answered I, "and have the vomit you wanted."

"Curse you and the vomit too!" said he, with great passion, "I want money and not poison. Where are your piastres?"

"I am a bad person, Fidele," said I, "to furnish you with either. I have neither money nor poison; but I advise you to drink a little warm water to clear your stomach, cool your head, and then lie down and compose yourself. I will see you to-morrow morning."

"Hakim, infidel, or devil! or whatever is your name," exclaimed the Shekh, as I moved to go out, "hearken to what I say. Consider where you are; this is the room where Mek Baady, a king, was slain by the hand of my father: look at his blood, where it has stained the floor, and never could be washed out. I am informed that you have 20,000 piastres in gold with you—either give me 2000 before you go out of this chamber, or you shall die; I will put you to death with my own hand." Upon this he took up his sword, which was lying at the head of his sofa, and, drawing it with great bravado, threw the scabbard into the middle of the room. He then tucked the sleeve of his shirt above his elbow, like a butcher, saying, "I wait your answer."

I now stepped one pace backwards, and dropped my cloak behind me, holding the little blunderbuss in my hand without taking it off the belt. I said in a firm tone of voice, "This is my answer. I am not a man, as I have told you before, to die like a beast by the hand of a drunkard. On your life, I charge you, stir not *from your sofa*." I had no need to give this injunction; he

heard the noise which the closing the joint in the stock of the blunderbuss made, and thought I had cocked it, and was instantly to fire. He let his sword drop, and threw himself on his back on the sofa, crying, "For God's sake, Hakim, I was but jesting." At the same time, he shouted "Brahim ! Mahomet ! El coom, el coom !"

"If one of your servants approaches me," said I, "that instant I blow you to pieces. Not one of them shall enter this room till they bring in my servants with them ; I have a number of them armed at your gate, and they will break in the instant they hear me fire."

The women had come to the door. My servants were admitted, each holding his blunderbuss in readiness for use. We were now greatly an overmatch for the Shekh, who sat far back on the sofa, and pretended that all he had done was in joke. A confused altercation followed, in which the servants took the chief part. As, however, no good could be expected from this expostulation, I took my leave, desiring the Shekh to go to bed and compose himself, and not try any more of these experiments, which would certainly end in his shame, if not in his punishment. He made no reply to this, only wishing us good night.

On the 13th of April, a naked Arab of the Jehaina arrived with intelligence that a caravan belonging to Atbara had been seized by Ammonios, Ayto Confu's governor of Nara. The Shekh of Jehaina was with Fidele at this time ; and the news struck them both with consternation. A message was sent for me, and I immediately went, leaving my servant to put up my quadrant. I had, indeed, an inclination to observe an eclipse of the moon which was then at hand ; but I thought it unnecessary, and resolved only to make use of the eclipse to frighten Fidele.



The Shekh of the Jehaina, and several of the principal men of his tribe were sitting with Fidele when I entered. There was also present a Moullah from Beyla, who had been sent to assist me in getting forward on my journey, and who discharged his duty very judiciously. The Moullah and the two Skekhs had been discussing the seizure of the caravan, before I came into the apartment; the former giving it as his opinion that this reprisal had probably been made on my account.

"Hakim," said the Moullah, "have you never sent a complaint to Yasine since you came to Teawa? Tell me truly; no harm shall befall you for it."

"If I were not to tell you truly, Shekh," said I, "I would not answer you at all. I am under no obligation to do it, nor am I under any fear. You are but at the beginning of this affair, and many will suffer before I do."

"True," said the Moullah; "but have you sent intelligence to Ras el Feel?"

"No, no," said Fidele, "he had it not in his power; nor is there a man in Teawa that durst go on such an errand. It is some disturbance about Tchelga."

I easily perceived that the Moullah wanted me to confess, and I saw the advantage of doing so myself. "I sent," said I, "messengers from Teawa two several times. The first, when Fidele pretended Yasine was to murder me in the desert; the second, when he said he had no camels; and I also mentioned the piastres, and his intention to murder me."

"Ammonios," said black Soliman, "and Yasine, Nara, and Ras el Feel, all belong to Ayto Confu, and were given by him to Yagoube for his maintenance all the time he was at Gondar. *Ayto Confu* and he are brothers. I swear by our holy faith that

Confu will be down here himself ; what does he care for a journey of two days ?”

All now with one voice condemned Fidele, who had not a word to say, except that, if he knew the person who carried the message, he would cut off his head, even though it was his own brother. “But it is impossible,” said he ; “should I not have known of the messenger being absent ?”

“Your messengers and mine, Shekh,” answered I, “are not of the same kind, nor shall I ask your leave when I am to send to Ras el Feel or Sennaar. But why are you alarmed at these asses being taken ? Should you not be afraid of something similar happening at Mecca ? Am not I under the protection of the Sherriffe ? When Metical Aga hears of this, will he not resent it upon your people ? Well then,” added I, “the difficulty is only to know if he is informed of this at Mecca. Friday the 17th is your festival. If the afternoon of that day passes like those of common days, I am a worthless man and an impostor ; but if on that day, before four o’clock, a sign be seen in the heavens that shall be thought by all of you unusual and extraordinary, then am I an innocent man, and Fidele’s designs against me are known to the world—at Sennaar and at Mecca, at Cairo and at Gondar, and everywhere else, and will not be pleasing either to God or man.”

“Hakim !” (He is indeed wise !) exclaimed the Shekh of the Jehaina.

“Ullah Akbar !” (God is great !) said the Moullah, lifting his eyes to heaven, and counting his beads very devoutly.

I then took leave of the Shekh, who appeared very much disconcerted at the supposed invisibility of my messengers. Two days afterwards, letters arrived from Yasine, who threatened to commission the Daveina Arabs to burn every stalk of corn

between Teawa and Beyla, if I was not allowed to depart. Yasmine's servants, who bore the letters, refused to come into Teawa, to eat of Fidele's bread or drink of his water, looking upon him as a declared enemy of their master. This had the desired effect upon the Shekh, who consented to let me go. The eclipse, which came on at the time I had predicted, was of great service in further strengthening the impressions made upon Fidele's mind as to the necessity of allowing me to depart. When the moon was wholly obscured (for the eclipse was a total one), a violent apprehension fell upon them all; and the women began to howl, as they do on all melancholy occasions of misfortune or death. "Now," said I, "I have kept my word; it will soon be clear again, and will do no harm to man or beast."

That evening I sent presents to the ladies—the most valuable one to the beautiful Aiscach; and on the following day I took leave of the Shekh, and set out for Beyla.

Our journey, for the first seven hours, was through a bare, sandy plain, without a vestige of any living creature, without water, and without grass—a country that seemed under the immediate curse of heaven. It was five in the afternoon before we started, and we travelled all night, halting in the morning at a place called Abou Jehaarat, and resuming our journey in the afternoon. At eight in the evening we arrived at Beyla. Mahomet, the Shekh, met us at the entrance of the town, and gave us a hearty welcome. A plentiful supper was provided, to which our party did full justice; but I was myself unable to taste it, being exceedingly tired and sick, and threatened with the return of an aguish disorder. A dose of bark and a good sleep, however, quite restored me, to the great joy of my friend *the Shekh*.

The village of Beyla is a very pleasant one, situate at the foot of a wooded hill. There is no water, except what is got from deep wells. Large plantations of Indian corn are every where about the town. The inhabitants are in continual apprehension from the Arabs Daveina at Sim-Sim, about forty miles to the south-east ; and from another powerful race called Wed abd el Gin (Sons of the Slaves of the Devil), who live to the south-west, between the Dender and the Nile. Beyla is another frontier town of Sennaar, on the side of Sim-Sim ; and between it and Teawa on the Sennaar side, and Ras el Feel, Nara, and Tchelga, on the Abyssinian side, all is desert and waste.

We resumed our journey on the afternoon of the 21st, and on the 24th we reached the river Dender. This river was now standing in pools ; but, from the vast wideness of its banks, and the great depth of its bed, it would seem that in time of rain it will contain nearly as much water as the Nile. At six o'clock in the evening, we set out from a sheltered spot on the banks of this stream, where we had rested during the heat of the day, and advanced through a large treeless plain, in which we found a number of villages. These were all nearly of a size, and placed at equal distances in the form of a semicircle. The plain was all of a red soapy earth, and the corn just sown. Though at this time it seemed very bare, the country, which was all under cultivation, would no doubt have a magnificent look when waving with grain. At nine we halted at a village of pagan Nuba. These are all soldiers of the Mek of Sennaar ; and the villages which they occupy surround the capital at a distance of four or five miles. Having settlements and provisions given them, as also arms put into their hands, they never wish to desert, but live a very domestic and sober life.

These Nuba have small features, but are woolly-headed and flat-nosed, like other negroes. They worship the moon, but do not seem to pay any attention to the sun. Their priests have great influence over them, but apparently from fear rather than affection. They are immoderately fond of swine's flesh, and maintain great herds of these animals. There is no running water in the immense plain they inhabit: the water is all procured from draw-wells. We saw them cleaning one of these, and, on measuring it, I found it nearly eight fathoms deep.

On the 25th, we set out from the villages of the Nuba, intending to reach Basbach, where is the ferry over the Nile; but we had scarcely advanced two miles into the plain, when we were enveloped by a violent whirlwind. The plain was red earth, which had been plentifully moistened by a shower in the night-time. An unfortunate camel, which seemed to be in the centre of the vortex, was lifted off its feet, and thrown down at a considerable distance, and two of its ribs broken. Although, so far as I could guess, I was not near the centre, I was thrown down on my face with such violence, that my nose gushed with blood. Two of my servants met the same fate. It plastered us all over with mud, almost as smoothly as could have been done by a trowel. It took away my sense of breathing for an instant, and my mouth and nose were full of mud when I recovered. I guess the sphere of the action of this whirlwind to have been about 200 feet. It demolished one-half of a small hut, as if it had been cut through with a knife, and dispersed the materials all over the plain, leaving the other half standing.

We took refuge in a village, where the Nuba gave us a kind welcome, and helped us to wash our clothes. They gave us a *piece of roasted hog*, which we (except the Mahometans of our

party) ate, much to their satisfaction. In our turn, we killed the camel which had been injured by the whirlwind ; and, after our Mahometan servants had taken what of it they required, the rest was given to our newly-acquired friends. We passed a very social and agreeable evening with these Nuba. I have seldom in my life, upon a journey, spent a more comfortable night. I had a very neat, clean hut, entirely to myself. Some of the Nuba watched for us all night, and took care of our beasts and baggage. They sang and replied to one another in notes full of pleasant melody, under the sweet influence of which I fell fast asleep.

Next morning, at six, we set out from this village of the Nuba, our way being still across this immense plain. All the morning there were terrible storms of thunder and lightning, and some very heavy showers of rain. At nine we arrived at Basboch, which is a large collection of huts of the Nuba, and has the appearance of a town. The governor, a venerable old man of about seventy, said, when I took him by the hand, " O, Christian ! what dost thou, at such a time, in such a country ?" I was surprised at his politeness—calling me Nazarani, *Infidel* being the general term among these brutish people ; but it seems he had been several times at Cairo. We were here comfortably lodged, though rather sparsely supplied with provisions.

Basbach is on the eastern bank of the Nile, not a quarter of a mile from the ford below. The river here runs north and south ; it is shallow towards the sides, but deep in the middle of the current, and in this part it is much infested with crocodiles. Sennaar is two miles and a half to the south-west of it. We heard the evening drum very distinctly, and not without anxiety, when we reflected to what a brutish people, according to all accounts, we were about to trust ourselves.

We waited here till the 29th, when leave was sent us to enter Sennaar. The boat on the ferry, being but a small one, had to make several turns to and fro, before we got all our packages landed on the western side. This, and the passage of our camels, seemed to have excited the appetite, or the curiosity, of the crocodiles. One, in particular, swam several times backwards and forwards along the side of the boat, without, however, making an attack on any of us. Being tired of his company, I fired at him with a rifle, and shot him directly under his fore shoulder, in the belly. The wound was undoubtedly mortal ; very few animals could have lived a moment after receiving it. He, however, dived to the bottom, leaving the water deeply tinged with his blood. The people at the ferry found him next day, perfectly dead. He was about twelve feet long ; and the boatmen told me that these are by much the most dangerous, being more fierce and active than the larger ones. The people of Sennaar, especially the Nuba, eat the crocodile. I never tasted it myself, but it looks very much like conger eel.

When we had got our baggage all carried over in safety, we were conducted into Sennaar, where a good house was provided for us a quarter of a mile from the king's palace.

## CHAPTER XVI.

*Four Months in Sennaar—Interview with the King—I act as Physician to the Queens and the Great Ladies—Their disagreeable Curiosity—Manners and Customs of Sennaar—Military Forces—Aspect of the Surrounding Country—Observations on Heat—In Difficulties from want of Funds—I leave Sennaar.*

THE morning after our arrival, a servant came from the palace to summon us to wait upon the king. We immediately obeyed. I took with me three servants—black Soliman, Ismael the Turk, and Michael, a Greek. The palace covers a very extensive area. It is all of one storey, built of clay, and the floors of earth. After passing through a number of unfurnished apartments, that seemed to have been intended for barracks, we reached the presence chamber. It was a small room, not twenty feet square, its floor covered with a Persian carpet, and its walls hung with tapestry. The king was sitting on a mattress laid on the ground, likewise covered with a Persian carpet, and round him were several cushions of Venetian cloth of gold. His dress did not correspond with this magnificence, for it was nothing but a large loose shirt of Surat blue cotton cloth. His head was uncovered; he wore his own short black hair, and was as white in colour as an Arab. His feet were bare, but covered by his shirt. He seemed to be about thirty-four; his



countenance was of a plebeian type, and he seemed to me to be a soft, timid, irresolute man. On my coming forward and kissing his hand, he looked at me for a minute, as if undetermined what to say. He then asked for an Abyssinian interpreter, as there are many of these about the palace. I said to him, in Arabic, that I understood as much of that language as would enable me to answer any questions he had to put to me; upon which he turned to the people that were with him, saying, "Downright Arabic, indeed!" He then said to me, "You did not learn the language in Habesh?" I answered, "No; I have been in Egypt, Turkey, and Arabia, where I learned it. But I have likewise often spoken it in Abyssinia, where Greek, Turkish, and several other languages are used." His majesty, however, pronounced this to be impossible. He did not think they knew anything of languages, except their own, in Abyssinia.

There were sitting in the side of the room opposite to the king, four men, dressed in white cotton shirts, with a white shawl covering their heads and part of their faces, by which it was known that they were religious men, or men of learning, or of the law. One of these answered the king's doubt of the Abyssinians' knowledge of languages: "They have languages enough; and you know that Habesh is called the paradise of asses." I then presented to the king, first the letter I had from the King of Abyssinia, and then that from the Sheriffe of Mecca. He took them both, and read them. "You are a physician and a soldier?" said he.

"Both, in time of need," replied I.

"But the Sheriffe's letter tells me, also," said the king, "that you are a nobleman in the service of a great king that they call *Englise-man* who is master of all the Indies, and who has Maho-

metan as well as Christian subjects, and allows them all to be governed by their own laws."

"Though I never said so to the Sherriffe," said I, "yet it is true. I am as noble as any individual in my nation, and am also servant to the greatest king now reigning upon earth, of whose dominions, it is likewise truly said, these Indies are but a small part."

"The greatest king!" said he that spoke about the asses, "You should not say that. You forgot the Grand Seignior. There are four: Otman, Fersee, Bornow, and Habesh."

"I neither forgot the Grand Seignior, nor do him wrong," replied I. "What I have said I have said."

"Kafrs and slaves, all of them!" said Ismael. "There is the Turk, the King of England, and the King of France. What kings are Bornow and the rest? Kafrs!"

"How comes it," said the king, "you that are so noble and learned that you know all things—all languages—and so brave that you fear no danger, but pass, with two or three old men, into such countries as this and Habesh, where Baady, my father, perished with an army: how comes it that you do not stay at home and enjoy yourself—eat, drink, take pleasure, and rest—and not wander like a poor man, a prey to every danger?"

"There are in your religion, as well as in mine," replied I, "men of learning, and those, too, of rank and nobility, who, on account of sins they have committed, or vows they have made, renounce the world, and become humble and poor, so as often to be insulted by wicked and low men not having the fear of God before their eyes."

"True; these are Dervish," said the three men in white shirts.

"I am, then, one of these Dervish," said I, "content with the bread that is given me, and bound for some years to travel in hardships and dangers, doing all the good I can to poor and rich, serving every man, and hurting none."

"Tybe! that is well," said the king. "And how long have you been travelling about?"

"Near twenty years," answered I.

"You must be very young to have committed so many sins," remarked the king.

"I did not say," replied I, "that I was one of those who travelled on account of their sins; but that there were some Dervishes that did so on account of their vows, and some to learn wisdom."

The king now made a sign, and a slave brought a cushion; which I would have refused, but he forced me to sit down upon it.

One of the three learned men then asked me if I knew when the Hagiuge Magiuge were to arrive. "Hagiuge Magiuge," said he, "are little people not so big as bees, or like the zimb, or fly of Sennaar, that come in great swarms out of the earth—ay, in multitudes that cannot be counted. Two of their chiefs are to ride upon an ass, and every hair of that ass is to be a pipe, and every pipe is to play a different kind of music, and all that hear and follow them are carried to hell."

"I know them not," said I, "and, in the name of the Lord, I fear them not, were they twice as little as you say they are, and twice as numerous! I trust I shall never be so fond of music as to go to hell after an ass, for all the tunes that he or they can play."

The king laughed violently. I rose to go away, for I was *heartily tired* of the conversation. In reply to my inquiry when

I should bring the king a present I had for him, I was informed that he would send me notice when I was to come. I accordingly went away. I found a number of people in the street, all having some taunt or affront for me. I passed through the great square before the palace, and could not help shuddering at the thought of what had happened in that spot to M. du Roule and his companions, though under a protection which should have secured them from all danger, every part of which I was then unprovided with.\*

The drum beat a little after six o'clock in the evening. We then had a very comfortable dinner sent us, consisting of camel's flesh stewed with a herb called *bammia*. After having dined, and finished the journal of the day, I began to unpack my instruments. About eight came a servant from the palace, telling me now was the time to bring the present to the king. I sorted the separate articles with all the speed I could, and we went directly to the palace. The king was then sitting in a large apartment, naked, and a servant was rubbing him over with grease, which had a very disgusting smell. He asked me if I ever greased myself as he did? when I replied that I did it very seldom, and fancied it must be very expensive; he said it was elephant's grease, which made people strong, and kept the skin very smooth.

The king's toilet being finished, I produced my present, which I told him the King of Abyssinia had sent to him, hoping that, according to the faith and custom of nations, he would not only protect me while here, but send me safely and speedily out of his dominions into Egypt. He answered that there was a time when he could have done all this and more, but times were

\* See page 107.

changed. Sennaar was in ruins, and was not like what it once was. He then ordered some perfumed sorbet to be brought for me to drink in his presence—a pledge that my person was in safety. I thereupon withdrew, and he went to his ladies.

A few days afterwards, I was again summoned to the palace. The king told me that several of his wives were ill, and desired that I would give them my advice. I was admitted into a large square apartment, very ill lighted, in which were about fifty women, all perfectly black, without any covering but a piece of cotton rag about their waists. While I was musing whether or not these all might be queens, or whether there was any queen among them, one of them took me rudely by the hand, and led me into another apartment, better lighted than the first. Upon a large bench or sofa, covered with blue Surat cloth, sat three women, clothed from the neck to the feet with blue cotton shirts.

One of these, who I found was the favourite, was about six feet high, and corpulent beyond all proportion. She seemed to me, next to the elephant and rhinoceros, to be the largest living creature I had met with. Her features were perfectly like those of a negro. A ring of gold passed through her under lip, and weighed it down till, like a flap, it covered her chin, and left bare her teeth, which were very small and fine. The inside of her lip she had made black with antimony. Her ears reached down to her shoulders, and had the appearance of wings; she had in each of them a large ring of gold, somewhat smaller than a man's little finger. The weight of these had drawn down the hole where her ear was pierced so much that three fingers might easily pass above the ring. She had a gold necklace, like what we used to call *esclavage*, of several rows, one below another, to

which were hung rows of sequins, pierced. She had on her ankles two manacles of gold, larger than any I had ever seen on the feet of felons, with which I could not conceive it possible for her to walk, but I afterwards found that they were hollow. The others were dressed pretty much in the same manner ; only one of them had chains which came from her ears to the outside of each nostril, where they were fastened. There was also a ring put through the gristle of her nose, and hanging down to the opening of her mouth. Upon my coming near them, the eldest put her hand to her mouth and kissed it, saying, at the same time, in very vulgar Arabic, "Kifhalek howaja ?" (How do you do, merchant ?) I never in my life was more pleased with distant salutations than at this time. I answered, "Peace be among you ! I am a physician, and not a merchant."

I shall not entertain the reader with the multitude of their complaints ; being a ladies' physician, discretion and silence are my first duties. They insisted upon being bled with the cupping instrument, a request which I readily complied with. After the operation was over, they asked me to give them the instrument itself, which I was obliged to do, after cupping two of their slaves, who had no complaints, merely to show the ladies how the operation was to be performed.

Another night I was obliged to attend them, and gave the queens and two or three of the great ladies vomits ; but I shall spare my readers the recital of so nauseous a scene. It was not without astonishment that I heard the queen, on this occasion, desire to see me in a dishabille like that in which she and her ladies had spontaneously put themselves. Refusal or resistance was in vain. I was surrounded by fifty or sixty women, all equal in stature or strength to myself. The whole of my cloth-

ing was, like theirs, a long loose shirt of blue Surat cotton cloth, reaching from the neck down to the feet. The only terms I could possibly, and that with great difficulty, make for myself, were, that they should be contented to strip me no further than the shoulders and breast. Upon seeing the whiteness of my skin, they all gave a loud cry, in token of dislike, and shuddered, seeming to consider it rather the effect of disease than natural. I think I never in my life felt so disagreeably. I have been in more than one battle, but surely I would joyfully have taken my chance again in any of them to have been freed from that examination.

During my stay at Sennaar, I paid a visit to Shekh Adelan, at Aira, and was well pleased with the reception I met with from that powerful chief. His brother Kittou proved very serviceable to me in Gondar, assuring me of protection when the king refused to take steps to secure me from insult or violence. I resolved to keep close at home till the arrival of Mahomet Abou Kalec, another brother of Adelan, who was approaching Sennaar with a considerable army, and who, I was assured, would put things on another footing. I employed my leisure time in putting into some form the observations that I had made on this extraordinary government.

It is one of the singularities which obtain among this brutish people, that the king ascends his throne under an admission that he may be lawfully put to death by his own subjects or slaves, upon a council being held by the great officers, if they decree that it is not for the advantage of the state that he be suffered to reign any longer. There is one officer of his own family, who alone can be the instrument of shedding his sovereign and kinsman's blood. This officer, who is called Sid el Coom, has no vote

in deposing the king, nor is any guilt imputed to him, however many of his sovereigns he thus regularly murders.

Upon the death of a king, his eldest son succeeds by right; and, immediately after, as many of the brothers of the reigning prince as can be apprehended are put to death by the Sid el Coom. Women never succeed to the throne; but no historical reason is given for the exclusion. Once in his reign the king is obliged, with his own hand, to plough and sow a piece of land. From this operation he is called Baady, *i.e.*, countryman or peasant—a name common to the whole race of kings, as Cæsar was among the Romans. The king, however, has commonly another name, by which he is distinguished from his predecessors.

Sennaar is in latitude 13° 34' 36" north, and in longitude 33° 30' 30" east from Greenwich. It stands close on the west bank of the Nile, the ground on which it is built being just elevated enough to preserve it from the periodical inundations of the river. The town is very populous, containing many good houses after the fashion of the country. They are built of clay, and are mostly of one storey, though the great officers have all houses of two. The soil of Sennaar is exceedingly fertile, yet very unhealthy both for man and beast, and unfavourable to their propagation. This seems to be owing to some noxious quality of the fat earth with which the town is surrounded on every side. This remarkable quality ceases, however, upon removing from the fertile country to the sands.

The dress of Sennaar is very simple. It consists of a long shirt of blue Surat cloth, from the neck down to the feet. The only difference between the dress of the men and that of the women is, that the latter have the neck wholly covered, while with the former it is bare. Both men and women anoint them-



selves, at least once a day, with camels' grease mixed with civet.

The principal diet of the poorer sort is millet, made into bread or flour. The rich make a pudding of this, with milk and butter, besides which they eat beef, partly roasted and partly raw. Their horned cattle are the largest and fattest in the world, and are exceedingly fine; but the common meat sold in the market is camels' flesh. The liver of the animal, and the spare rib, are always eaten raw.

The forces at Sennaar, immediately round the capital, consist of about 14,000 Nuba, who fight naked, having no other armour than a short javelin and a round shield; and about 1800 horse, all black, mounted by black slaves, armed with coats of mail, and without any other weapon than a broad Slavonian sword. These, I suppose, by the weight and power of man and horse, would bear down, or break through, double their number of any other troops in the world: nobody that has not seen this cavalry, can have any idea to what perfection the horse rises here. The Mek has not one musket in his whole army. Besides these horse, there is a great but uncertain number of Arabs, who pay tribute to the Mek, and who may be available in time of need.

Nothing is more pleasant than the country around Sennaar, in the end of August and beginning of September—I mean so far as the eye is concerned. Instead of that barren waste, which it appeared on our arrival in May, the corn, now sprung up, made the whole of this immense plain appear a level green land, interspersed with great lakes of water, and ornamented at certain intervals with groups of villages, the conical tops of the houses presenting, at a distance, the appearance of small encampments. *Through this immense plain winds the Nile, a delightful river*

there, full to the very brim, but never overflowing. The banks of the Nile about Sennaar resemble the pleasantest parts of Holland in the summer season ; but when the rains cease, and the sun exerts his utmost influence, the dora begins to ripen, the leaves to turn yellow and to rot, the lakes to putrefy and be full of vermin, all this beauty suddenly disappears. Bare, scorched Nubia returns, and all its terrors of poisonous winds and moving sands, glowing and ventilated with sultry blasts, which are followed by epilepsies, apoplexies, violent fevers, obstinate agues, and lingering painful dysenteries, still more obstinate and mortal.

After what I have said of the latitude of Sennaar, it will scarce be necessary to state that the heats are excessive. The thermometer rises in the shade to  $119^{\circ}$  ; but the degree of the thermometer does not convey any idea of the effect the sun has upon the body. Cold and hot are terms merely relative, determined, not by the latitude, but by the elevation of the place ; when, therefore, we say hot, some other explanation is necessary concerning the place where we are, in order to give an adequate idea of the sensations produced by that heat upon the body. The degree of the thermometer conveys this very imperfectly :  $90^{\circ}$  is excessively hot at Loheia, in Arabia Felix, and yet the latitude of Loheia is but  $15^{\circ}$ , whereas  $90^{\circ}$  at Sennaar is, as to sense, only warm, although Sennaar, as we have said, is in lat.  $13^{\circ}$ .

At Sennaar, then, I call it *cold* when one fully clothed, and at rest, feels in want of fire. I call it *cool* when one fully clothed and at rest, feels he could bear more covering all over, or in part, than he has on. I call it *temperate* when a man, so clothed and at rest, feels no such want, and can take moderate exercise,

such as walking about a room without sweating. I call it *warm* when a man, so clothed, does not sweat when at rest, but, upon moderate motion, sweats and cools again. I call it *hot* when a man sweats at rest, and excessively on moderate motion. I call it *very hot* when a man, with thin or little clothing, sweats much though at rest. I call it *excessively hot* when a man in his shirt, at rest, sweats excessively, when all motion is painful, and the knees feel feeble as if after a fever. I call it *extremely hot* when the strength fails, a disposition to faint comes on, a straitness is found in the temples, as if a small cord was drawn tight around the head, the voice impaired, the skin dry, and the head seems more than ordinarily large and light. From 70° to 78° in Fahrenheit's thermometer is cool; from 79° to 92° temperate; at 92° begins warm. The natives can bear the heat much better than we can. On the 2d of August, while I was lying perfectly enervated on a carpet, in a room deluged with water, at twelve o'clock, the thermometer at 116°, I saw several black labourers working with great vigour, without any symptoms of being at all incommoded.

Many vexatious delays took place, after I had made every preparation for leaving Sennaar. Hagi Belal, the person to whom I had letters of recommendation, lifted up his hands in pretended astonishment when I asked him to procure me 200 sequins for the journey. He asked me if I thought money grew upon trees at Sennaar; and stated that it was with the utmost difficulty he could spare me 20 dollars. This was a stroke that seemed to insure our destruction. Hagi Belal was inflexible; he began now to be weary of us, and to see us but seldom; and there was great likelihood of his soon withdrawing himself altogether. My *servants* began to murmur; some of them had known of my

gold chain from the beginning, and these, in the common danger, imparted what they knew to the rest. In short, I resolved, though very unwillingly, to abandon my gold chain, the honourable recompense of a day full of fatigue and danger. I was indebted to Hagi Belal for the provisions we had consumed during our stay. To put a check upon him, I sent for the Sidel Coom, in whose presence I accused him in the strongest terms of duplicity and breach of faith. After settling with Hagi Belal for provisions, and for camels for my baggage, I received back from him six links, the miserable remains of one hundred and eighty-four of which my noble chain once consisted.

News had arrived that Mahomet Abou Kalec had advanced to the river El-aice, and that Shekh Adelan had gone to join him. A message was received from Adelan requesting the king to send me on my way; and his majesty, who had an idea that these powerful nobles might consign him into the hands of the Sidel Coom, made no further opposition to my leaving Sennaar, which I did on the 5th. of September 1772.

## CHAPTER XVII.

*From Sennaar to Chendi—Interview with an Arab Prince—Passage of the Nile—Junction of the Abiad, or White River, with the Nile—The Nubian breed of Horses—Arrival at Chendi—Interviews with Sittina—I engage a Hybeer, or Guide, for the Passage of the Desert—Departure from Chendi.*

ON the evening of the day we left Sennaar, my servants entreated me with one voice to continue north through Atbara, instead of turning westward to Shaddly, as had been originally proposed. They promised to bear fatigue and hunger cheerfully, and to live and die with me, provided I would proceed homewards, and free them from the horrors of Sennaar and its king. I told them that my resolution was perfectly conformable to their wishes, and that I had taken measures to insure success and avert danger as much as possible. I recommended diligence, sobriety, and subordination, as the only means of arriving happily at the end proposed ; and assured them that we should have all one common fare and fortune throughout our journey. Never was any discourse more gratefully received ; every toil was welcome in flying from Sennaar, and they already began to think themselves at the gates of Cairo.

On the 8th of September, we arrived at Wed el Tumbel, a cluster of small villages on the banks of a pool of water. Here *there is great plenty* of ebony bushes, as well as of a species of

dwarf acacia, with very small leaves, and long pods of a strong saccharine taste. This latter tree is called Loto, and is probably the plant on whose fruit the ancient Libyans are said to have fed. For four days after our departure from Wed el Tumbel, we were much tormented with the fly,\* the very noise of which put our camels in such a fright that they ran violently among the thickest trees and bushes, endeavouring to brush off their loads. These flies do not bite at night or in the cool of the morning.

On the 16th we arrived at Herbagi, a large, pleasant village, the seat of Wed Ageeb, hereditary prince of the Arabs, now subject to the government of Sennaar. Immediately on my arrival, I went to wait upon this prince. He seemed to be a man of very gentle manners, and about thirty years of age. He had never before seen a European, and testified great surprise at my complexion. He spoke very contemptuously of the king of Sennaar, but very respectfully of Adelan and Abou Kalec, any one of whose little fingers, he said, was sufficient to crush the Mek, and all who adhered to him.

Wed Ageeb supplied us with abundance of provisions, during a stay of two days at Herbagi. He gave me a letter to his sister Sittina, which, he said, would be of service to me if I went by Chendi, Barbar, and the great desert, as the country as far as Chendi belonged to her. Beyond that place, he assured me, there was no protection to be relied on but that of heaven.

For two days after we left Herbagi, our way lay through an interesting country, partly covered with very pleasant woods, and partly in lawns. As we advanced, however, the country became barren, and instead of corn fields, we saw large, dead, sandy plains—only the banks of the Nile, parallel to which our road lay,

\* See p. 74-76.

exhibiting any freshness of vegetation. On the 21st, we reached the passage of the Nile, which is three miles from a straggling village called Gidid. The manner in which they pass the camels at this ferry, is by fastening cords under their hind quarters, and then tying a halter to their heads. Two men sustain these cords, and a third the halter, so that the camels, by swimming, carry the boat on shore. One is fastened on each side of the stern, and one along each side of the stem. These useful beasts suffer much by this rude treatment, and many die on the passage, in spite of all the care that can be taken. Their death, however, is often due to the deliberate villany of the boatmen, who privately put salt in the camel's ears, which makes him desperate and ungovernable, till, by fretting, and plunging his head constantly under water, he loses his breath, and is drowned; the boatmen then have gained their end, and feast upon the flesh. Although our boatmen had a very bad character, we passed with our camels and baggage without loss or accident—good words, and a promise of recompense having rendered them tractable.

On the following day we reached Halfaia, a large and pleasant town, the limit of the tropical rains. The people here eat cats, also the river horse and the crocodile, both of which are very abundant. We stayed here a week, resuming our journey on the 29th, when we reached the village of Wed Hojila. The river Abiad, which is larger than the Nile, joins it here. Still the Nile preserves the name of Bahar el Azergue, or the Blue River, which it got at Sennaar. The Abiad is a very deep river; it runs dead, and with little inclination, and preserves its stream always undiminished, because rising in latitudes where there are continual rains.

*At Halfaia begins that noble breed of horses, justly celebrated*

all over the world. They are the breed which was introduced here at the Saracen conquest, and has been preserved unmixed to the present day. They seem to be a distinct animal from the Arabian horse, such as I have seen in the plains of Arabia Deserta, south of Palmyra and Damascus, where I take the most excellent of the Arabian breed to be, in the tribes of Mowalli and Annecy, which is about lat.  $36^{\circ}$ ; whilst Dongola and the dry country near it seem to be the centre of excellence for this nobler animal.

What figure the Nubian breed of horses would make in point of fleetness is very doubtful, their make being entirely different from that of the Arabian; but if beautiful and symmetrical parts, great size and strength, the most agile, nervous, and elastic movements, great endurance of fatigue, docility of temper, and an attachment to man that seems beyond that of any other domestic animal, can promise anything for a stallion, the Nubian is, above all comparison, the most eligible in the world.

All noble horses in Nubia are said to be descended from one of the five horses upon which Mahomet and his four immediate successors fled from Mecca to Medina, on the night of the Hegira. The horses of Halfaia are not so large as those of Dongola, where few are lower than sixteen hands. They are chiefly black, but there are a few white, and bright bay.

A journey of two days brought us to Wed Baal a Nagga, a large village belonging to a Fakir, or saint, of the first consideration in the government of Chendi. The Nile is very picturesque and pleasant here. We arrived at the village of Chendi on the following morning.

Chendi, or Chandi, is a large village, the capital of its district, the government of which belongs to Sittina (which means



r Lār), the sister of Wed Ageeb, the principal of the his part of the country. She had been married, but husband was dead. She had one son, Idris Wed el Faal, who succeed on her death, but who in effect governed already. town consists of about 250 houses, some of them tolerable tellings, but the great majority miserable hovels, built of clay and reeds. The women of Chendi are esteemed the most beautiful in Atbara, and the men the greatest cowards; we had, however, little opportunity of verifying the truth of either part of this common opinion.

On the 12th of October, I waited upon Sittina, who received me behind a screen, so that it was impossible for me either to see her figure or face. She expressed herself with great politeness, and wondered exceedingly how a white man should venture so far into so ill-governed a country. "Allow me, madam," said I, "to complain of a breach of hospitality in you, which no Arab has been yet guilty of towards me."

"Me!" exclaimed she; "that would be strange, indeed, to a man that bears my brother's letter. How can that be?"

"Why, you tell me, madam, that I am a white man, by which I know that you see me, without giving me the like advantage. The queens of Sennaar did not use me so hardly: I had a full sight of them, without having used any impertunity."

On this she burst into a fit of laughter, and, after some conversation about medicines to make her hair grow, or rather to hinder it from falling off, desired me to come to her the next day, when she expected her son Idris to be at home. She that day sent us plenty of provisions from her own table.

*It was excessively hot on the 13th. In addition to the burn-*

ing sun, there was the poisonous simoom, blowing as if from an oven. Our eyes were dim, our lips cracked, our knees tottering, our throats perfectly dry, and no relief was found from drinking an immoderate quantity of water. The people advised me to dip a sponge in vinegar and water and hold it before my mouth ; and this greatly relieved me. In the evening I went to Sittina. Upon entering the house, a black slave laid hold of me by the hand, and placed me in a passage, at the end of which were two opposite doors. I did not well know the reason of this ; but had staid only a few minutes, when I heard one of the doors at the end of the passage open, and Sittina appeared, magnificently dressed, and having on her head a kind of round cap of solid gold, beaten very thin and hung round with sequins. A variety of gold chains, solitaires, and necklaces of the same metal, hung round her neck. Her hair was plaited in ten or twelve small divisions, like tails, which hung down below her waist ; and over her was thrown a common white cotton garment, above which was a black silk scarf, disposed very gracefully. She had on her wrists two gold bracelets, like manacles, and ornaments of a similar description about her ankles. She stopped in the middle of the passage, saying "Kifhalek ?" (How are you ?) I took this opportunity to kiss her hand, a compliment to which she showed no reluctance. "Allow me, as a physician, madam," said I, "to say one word." She bowed, and I was ushered into the apartment by one door, while she entered by another.

She was scarcely forty, above the middle size, with a round, plump face, large mouth, very red lips, and the finest teeth and eyes I have seen. Between her eye-brows she had a small speck made of cohol or antimony, four-cornered, and of the size of the smallest patches our women used to wear ; another rather longer

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p of her nose, and one on the middle of her chin.  
ing dialogue took place between us :—

*a.* "Tell me what you would say to me as a physician."

*Youssef.* "It is, madam but in consequence of your dis-  
ease yesterday. That heavy gold cap, with which you press  
our hair, will certainly be the cause of a great part of it falling  
"

*Sitt.* "I believe so ; but I should catch cold, I am so accus-  
tomed to it, if I was to leave it off. Are you a man of name and  
family in your own country ?"

*Ya.* "Of both, madam."

*Sitt.* "Are the women handsome there ?"

*Ya.* "The handsomest in the world, madam ; but they are so  
good, and so excellent in all other respects, that no one thinks at  
all of their beauty, nor do they value themselves upon it."

*Sitt.* "And do they allow you to kiss their hands ?"

*Ya.* "I understand you, madam, though you have mistaken  
me. There is no familiarity in kissing hands ; it is a mark of  
homage and distant respect, paid in my country to our sovereigns,  
and to none earthly besides."

*Sitt.* "But do you know that no man ever kissed my hand  
but you ?"

*Ya.* "It is impossible that I should know it, nor is it material.  
Of this I am confident, it was meant respectfully, cannot hurt you,  
and ought not to offend you."

*Sitt.* "It certainly has done neither. I wish very much Idris  
my son would come and see you, as it is on his account I dressed  
myself to-day."

*Ya.* "I hope, madam, when I do see him, he will think of some  
of forwarding me safely to Barbar, on my way to Egypt."

*Sitt.* "Safely! God forgive you! you are throwing yourself away wantonly. Idris himself, king of the country, dares not undertake such a journey. All the Hybeers are gone a few days ago to Cairo with Mahomet Towash. You must not go without a good man with you; I will not suffer you. These Bishareen are people known here, and may be trusted."

I may here explain that the Hybeers are guides, whose employment it is to conduct caravans travelling through the desert. They are men of great consideration, knowing perfectly the situation and properties of all kinds of water to be met on the route. It is also necessary for them to know the tribes which possess the various districts, whether friendly or hostile; the places where the simoom is most prevalent, and the seasons of its blowing; and the parts of the desert occupied by moving sands. Owing to the great diminution of trade, the office of Hybeer is not now of such high importance as it once was.

One day, as I was sitting in my tent, musing upon the unpromising aspect of my affairs, an Arab of very ordinary appearance, and naked, with the exception of a cotton cloth round his middle, came up to me, and offered to conduct me to Barbar, and thence to Egypt. He said his house was at Daroo, on the side of the Nile, about twenty miles beyond Syene or Assouan, in the direction of Cairo. On my asking him why he had not gone with Mahomet Towash and his company, he said he did not like them, and would be very much mistaken if their journey ended well. On pressing him further if this was really the only reason, he told me that he had been sick for some months at Chendi, and had contracted debt, and had been obliged to pawn his clothes; and that his camel was detained for what still remained unpaid. After much conversation, I found that Idris (for that was his

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a man of some substance in his own country, and  
daughter married to the Schourbatchie of Assouan. A  
n was soon made. I redeemed his camel and cloak ; and  
to show me the way to Egypt, where he was to be recom-  
sed according to his behaviour.

I now prepared to leave Chendi ; but first returned thanks  
my benefactress Sittina for all her favours. She called for  
y guide, and gave him very positive instructions, mingled with  
eats, in case of misbehaviour. She gave me a letter to the  
ekh of one of the tribes of the Bishareen Arabs, commending  
me to his protection. I begged that I might be again allowed  
to testify my gratitude by kissing her hand, to which she con-  
descended in the most gracious manner, laughing, and saying,  
“ If my son Idris saw me just now, he would think me mad ! ”

Having made every preparation, I left Chendi on the 20th of  
October.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

*Across the Great Desert of Nubia—The Tacazzé—I enter the Desert—  
Moving Pillars of Sand—The Simoom—An attempt to steal our  
Camels—Capture of the Thief—What shall we do with him ?—  
Great Distress—Camels and Baggage abandoned—Melancholy  
Reflections—The Sound of Waters—Arrival at Syene.*

OUR road still lay parallel to the Nile. On the day after leaving Chendi, we passed five or six large villages, and halted under some trees to feed our camels, when we had advanced about ten miles. At this place begins a large island in the Nile, called Kurgos, several miles long, and full of villages, trees, and corn. Opposite to this is the mountain Gibbainy, where is the first scene of ruins I have met with since those of Axum, in Abyssinia. We saw here heaps of broken pedestals, like those of Axum, all plainly designed for the statues of the dog ; some pieces of obelisks, likewise, with hieroglyphics, almost totally obliterated. The Arabs told us that these ruins were very extensive ; and that many pieces of statues, both of men and animals, had been dug up there. Perhaps this is the ancient city of Meröe.

After a journey of five days, we came to the Tacazzé, a tributary of the Nile, and the boundary between Atbara and Barbar. The Tacazzé is here about a quarter of a mile broad, exceedingly deep and clear as in Abyssinia, where I had often seen it. The ferry is about half a mile from its junction with the Nile. Though

the boats were smaller, and the people more brutish and less expert than those at the last ford, we passed without any difficulty—the supposed sanctity of our characters (they took us for pilgrims to Mecca), and liberal payment, contributing to inspire them with respect for us. I reflected, with much satisfaction, upon the many circumstances the sight of this river recalled to my mind ; but still the greatest was, that the scenes of these were now far distant, and that I was by so much the more advanced towards home.

On the following day, October 26th, leaving the Nile about a mile on our left, we continued our journey over gravel and sand, through a wood of acacia trees, the colour of whose flowers was now white, whereas all those we had before seen were yellow. In the afternoon we came to Gooz, a small village, which is nevertheless the capital of Barbar. This is a collection of miserable hovels, built of clay and canes. Here a misfortune happened to Idris our hybeer, who was arrested for debt and carried to prison. As we were now upon the very edge of the desert, and to see no other inhabited place till we should reach Egypt, I was not displeased to have it in my power to lay him under one other obligation before trusting our lives in his hands. I therefore paid his debt and reconciled him with his creditors, who, on their part, behaved very moderately to him.

Having received all the assurances possible from Idris, that he would live and die with us, and, having repeated the prayer of peace, we committed ourselves to the Desert. Our party consisted of Ismael the Turk, two Greek servants besides Georgis, who was almost blind and useless, two Barbarins, who took care of the camels, Idris, and a young man a relation of his ; in all nine persons. We were all well armed with blunderbusses, swords,

pistols, and double-barrelled guns, except Idris and his lad, who had lances, the only arms they could use. Five or six naked wretches of the Turcorory joined us at the watering place, much against my will, for I knew that we should probably be reduced to the disagreeable alternative of either seeing them perish of thirst before our eyes, or, by assisting them, running a great risk of perishing along with them.

We left Gooz on the 9th of November, at noon, and halted at the little village of Hassa, where we filled our water-skins—an operation which occupied a whole day, as we had to take every means to secure them from leaking or evaporation. While the camels were loading, I bathed myself with infinite pleasure for a long half hour in the Nile, and thus took leave of my old acquaintance, very doubtful if we should ever meet again. We then turned to the north-east, leaving the Nile, and entering into a bare desert of fixed gravel, without trees, and of a very disagreeable whitish colour, mixed with small pieces of white marble, like alabaster. Our camels, we found, were too heavily loaded ; but we comforted ourselves with the reflection, that this fault would be remedied by the daily consumption of our provisions. We had been travelling only two days, when our misfortunes began, from a circumstance we had not attended to. Our shoes, that had long needed repair, became at last absolutely useless, and our feet were much inflamed by the burning sand.

On the 13th, we saw, about a mile to the north-west of us, Hambily, a rock not considerable in size, but, from the plain country in which it is situated, having the appearance of a great tower or castle. South of it were two smaller hills, forming, along with it, land-marks of the utmost consequence to caravans, because they are too considerable in size to be at any time covered



by the moving sands. We alighted on the following day among some acacia trees, at Waadi el Halboub, after travelling about twenty miles. We were here at once surprised and terrified by a sight, surely one of the most magnificent in the world. In that vast expanse of desert from W. to N.W. of us, we saw a number of prodigious pillars of sand at different distances, at one time moving with great celerity, at another stalking on with majestic slowness. At intervals we thought they were coming to overwhelm us ; and again they would retreat, so as to be almost out of sight, their tops reaching to the very clouds. There the tops often separated from the bodies ; and these, once disjoined, dispersed in the air, and did not appear more. Sometimes they were broken near the middle, as if struck with a large cannon shot. About noon, they began to advance with considerable swiftness upon us, the wind being very strong at north. Eleven of them ranged along side of us, about the distance of three miles. The greatest diameter of the largest appeared to me at that distance as if it would measure ten feet. They retired from us with a wind at S.E., leaving an impression upon my mind to which I can give no name, though surely one ingredient in it was fear, with a considerable deal of wonder and astonishment. It was vain to think of flying ; the swiftest horse, or fastest sailing ship could be of no use to carry us out of this danger ; and the full persuasion of this rivetted me to the spot where I stood, and let the camels gain on me so much, that, in my state of lameness, it was with some difficulty I could overtake them. The effect this stupendous sight had upon Idris was to set him to his prayers, or rather to his charms ; for, except the names of God and Mahomet, all the rest of his words were mere gibberish and nonsense. Ismael the Turk, violently abused him for not praying in

the words of the Koran, at the same time maintaining, with great apparent wisdom, that nobody had charms to stop these moving sands but the inhabitants of Arabia Deserta.

From this day subordination, though it did not entirely cease, rapidly declined ; all was discontent, murmuring, and fear. Our water was greatly diminished, and that terrible death by thirst began to stare us in the face, owing, in a great measure, to our own imprudence. Ismael, who had been left sentinel over the skins of water, had slept so soundly, that a Turcorory had opened one of the skins that had not been touched, in order to serve himself out of it at his own discretion. I suppose that, hearing somebody stir, and fearing detection, the Turcorory had withdrawn himself as speedily as possible, without tying up the mouth of the girba, which we found in the morning with scarce a quart of water in it.

On the 16th, our men, if not gay, were in better spirits than I had seen them since we left Gooz. The rugged top of Chiggre was before us, and we knew that there we would solace ourselves with plenty of good water. As we were advancing, Idris suddenly cried out, "Fall upon your faces, for here is the simoom !" I saw from the south-east a haze come, in colour like the purple part of the rainbow, but not so compressed or thick. It did not occupy twenty yards in breadth, and was about twelve feet high from the ground. It was a kind of blush upon the air, and moved very rapidly, for I scarce could turn to fall upon the ground, with my head to the northward, when I felt the heat of its current plainly upon my face. We all lay flat on the ground, as if dead, till Idris told us it was blown over. The meteor or purple haze which I saw was indeed past, but the light air that still blew was of a heat to threaten suffocation. For my part, I found distinctly

in my breast that I had imbibed a part of it, nor was I free from an asthmatic sensation till I had been some months in Italy, at the baths of Poretta, nearly two years afterwards.

This phenomenon of the simoom, unexpected by us, though foreseen by Idris, caused us all to relapse into our former despondency. It still continued to blow, so as to exhaust us entirely, though the blast was so weak as scarcely would have raised a leaf from the ground. Towards evening it ceased ; and a cooling breeze came from the north, blowing five or six minutes at a time, and then falling calm. We reached Chiggre that night, very much fatigued.

Chiggre is a small, narrow valley, closely covered up, and surrounded with barren rocks. The wells are ten in number, and the narrow gorge which opens to them is not ten yards broad. The springs, however, are very abundant. Wherever a pit is dug five or six feet deep, it is immediately filled with water. The principal pool is about forty yards square, and five feet deep ; but the best-tasted water was in the cleft of a rock. All the wells were so foul, from having been much frequented by animals, both land and aquatic, that it was impossible to drink without putting a piece of cotton over the mouth, to keep out, by filtration, the filth of dead animals.

Our first attention was to the camels, to which we gave a double feed of dora, that they might drink for the rest of the journey, should the wells in the way prove scant of water. We then bathed in a large pool, the water of which was very cold, from its being in a cave inaccessible to the sun. All my people seemed to be greatly refreshed by this refrigeration ; but it was otherwise with the Turcorory, one of whom died about an hour after our arrival, and another early the next morning.

Subordination now seemed entirely at an end. It was with the utmost difficulty that I prevailed upon my servants to assist me to set up my large quadrant, to determine the situation of this place, which Idris declared to be half way to Assouan. I found it to be in  $20^{\circ} 58'$  north latitude.

We left Chiggre on the 17th, and on the following day reached Terfowey. On our way we again saw the sand pillars, which now moved steadily south. Idris pointed out to me some sandy hillocks, shortly before we reached Terfowey, and told me that one of the largest caravans that ever left Egypt was there buried in the sand, to the number of some thousands of camels. We found Terfowey a pleasant halting-place, being full of trees and grass. We lighted a large fire, for the nights were excessively cold, though the thermometer was at  $53^{\circ}$ . The cold occasioned me inexpressible pain in my feet, now swelled to a monstrous size, and inflamed and excoriated all over. I had taken upon me the charge of the baggage, and Mahomet, Idris's young man, the care of the camels ; but he was gone to the well with the rest, though expected to return immediately.

While I was sitting, musing upon the unpromising aspect of affairs, I heard the chain of the camels clink, as if somebody was unloosing them, and then, by the gleam of the fire, I distinctly saw a man pass swiftly by, stooping as he went along, with his face almost close to the ground. A little time after this I heard another clink of the chain, as if from a pretty sharp blow, and immediately after a movement among the camels. I rose, and cried in a threatening tone in Arabic, "I charge you on your life, whoever you are, either come up to me directly, or keep at a distance till day ; but come that way no more—why should you throw your life away ?" Mahomet, hearing my voice, came

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the well to see what was the matter. We went to the camels, and, upon examination, found that one of the chains had been broken, but the opening was enough to let the corresponding link through. A hard stone was driven through a link of one of the chains of her camel, and left sticking in it, the chain not being entirely broken through. We saw, besides, the print of a man's feet in sand ; and found that various small articles had been carried off. There was no need to tell us, after this, that we were not to sleep that night.

Our situation was one of the most desperate that could be figured. We were in the middle of the most barren, inhospitable desert in the world, and it was with the utmost difficulty that from day to day we could carry wherewithal to assuage our thirst. We had with us the only bread it was possible to procure for some hundred miles. Lances and swords were not necessary to destroy us ; the bursting of a girba, the lameness or death of a camel, a thorn or sprain in the foot, which might disable us from walking, were as certain death to us as a shot from a cannon. There could be no staying for one another : to lose time was to die.

Our only chance against these enemies, of whose presence we were made aware by the attempt upon the camels, was, that their number might be so small that, by our superiority in firearms and in courage, we might turn the misfortune upon them, deprive them of their camels and means of carrying water, and leave them scattered in the desert, to that death which either they or we must suffer. I briefly explained myself to this purpose to the people, on which they raised a shout, " God is great ! let them *come !*"

The day broke ; no Arabs appeared. Fearing lest, if they were few, they might send for assistance against us, I took Ismael and two Barbarins with me, to see who these neighbours of ours could be. We soon traced the footsteps of the man who had been at our camels to two ragged, old, dirty tents, pitched behind a rock at some distance. The two Barbarins entered one of them, and found a naked woman there. Ismael and I ran briskly into the largest, where we saw a man and woman, both naked, frightful, emaciated figures, not like the inhabitants of this world. An infant was lying on a rag in the corner. I sprang forward upon the man, and taking him by the hair of the head, pulled him upon his back on the floor. Setting my foot upon his breast, and pointing my knife to his throat, I said to him sternly, "If you mean to pray, do so quickly, for you have but this moment to live." The fellow was so frightened he scarce could beg us to spare his life ; but the woman did not copy the passive disposition of her husband. She seized an old lance, with which I doubt not she would have sufficiently distinguished herself, had not Ismael felled her to the ground with the butt-end of his blunderbuss. A violent howl was set up by the remaining woman. "Tie them, Ismael," said I ; "keep them separate, and carry them to the baggage ; and you shall strike their heads off where they intended to leave us miserably to perish with hunger." While the Barbarins were tying the women, the mother of the child turned to her husband, and said in a mournful, despairing tone of voice, "Did I not tell you, you would never thrive if you hurt that good man ? did not I tell you this would happen for murdering the Aga ?"

My people with one voice demanded that these wretches should be put to death ; and Ismael was so determined upon the

execution, that he was already seeking a knife 'sharper than his own. "Stay, Hagi Ismael," said I, "till we see if this thief is a liar also. If he prevaricates in his answers to my questions, you shall cut his head off." Ismael answered, "Truth is truth ; if he lies, he can deserve no better."

On my interrogating the Bishareen as to who the good man was whom his wife reproached him with having murdered, he said, "It was a black, an Aga from Chendi." "Mahomet Towash !" exclaimed Ismael ; "Ullah Kerim ! God is merciful !" "The same," replied the Bishareen ; who proceeded to relate the particulars of the death of this unfortunate man and his servants, who left Chendi a few days after my arrival there. His wife, who was questioned separately, gave the same account, imploring me to have mercy upon her ; and, laying down her child before me, shrieked out, "If you are a Turk, make it a slave, but do not kill it, and spare my husband !"

A council was held, to consider what was to be done with our prisoners. "It has appeared to me," said I, "that often, since we began this journey, we have had visible instances of God's protection, when we should have lost our lives if we had gone by the rules of our own judgment only. We are, it is true, of different religions, but we all worship the same God. Suppose the present case should be a trial whether we really trust in God's protection, or whether we believe our safety owing to our own foresight and courage. If the man's life be now taken away, to-morrow we may meet the Bishareen, and then we shall all reflect upon the folly of our precaution. For my own part, my constant creed is, that I am in God's hands, whether in the house or in the desert, and not in those of the Bishareen, or of any *lawless* spoiler ; therefore, my determination is, to spare the life

of even this man, and I will oppose his being put to death by every means in my power." I then explained to them that we might provide for our own defence and preservation by taking the man along with us, leaving the women and child where they were, and with them the camels that belonged to the Bishareen, to provide them with milk. The man would have his right hand chained to the left of one of my people, and thus each would take him in turn till we reached Egypt. If he proved treacherous, he would be instantly stabbed to the heart by the man that conducted him; but if faithful, on the day we arrived safely in Egypt, I would give him a good camel, clothes for himself and the women, and a load of dora.

Universal applause followed this speech; Idris, above all, expressing his warmest approbation. I sent two Barbarins to lame the camels effectually, but not so as to injure them past recovery. This was done to make it impossible for the women to go to the encampment of the Bishareen Arabs, and put them upon our track. After this, I took twelve handfuls of the bread which was our only food, and which indeed we could scarcely spare, and left it to this miserable family.

On the 20th we left the well at Terfowey, after having warned the women that their chance of seeing their husband again depended wholly upon his and their faithful conduct. We had scarcely advanced more than half an hour, when our prisoner first, and then Idris, cried out, "The simoom! the simoom!" My curiosity would not suffer me to fall down without looking behind me. I saw the coloured haze as before, its edges, however, not so defined, but like a very thin smoke. We all fell on our faces, and the simoom passed with a gentle ruffling wind. It blew for about three hours, and we were all very sick and



exhausted that night, when we reached Naibey, a brackish well. Near this well we found the remains of a man and two camels, dried and shrivelled with the heat. This day one of our camels died.

One of the Turcorory was seized with frenzy or madness as we were crossing a sandy flat, on the 22d. I offered to bleed him, which he refused ; and though we gave him water he took very little of it. He rolled upon the ground and moaned, often repeating two or three words, which I did not understand. He refused to continue his journey, or rise from where he lay, so that we were obliged to leave him to his fortune. Another of our camels died the same afternoon, at Umarack, where we halted for the night.

I here began to provide for the worst. I saw the fate of our camels approaching, and our men growing weak in proportion. Our bread began to fail us, although we had plenty of camel's flesh in its stead ; our water, though we were to find it more frequently than in the beginning of our journey, was nevertheless brackish, and scarcely served to quench our thirst ; and, above all, the dreadful simoom had perfectly exhausted our strength, and brought upon us a degree of cowardice and languor that we struggled with in vain. I therefore, as the last effort, began to throw away everything weighty I could spare, or that was not absolutely necessary, such as all shells, fossils, minerals, and petrifications, that I could get at, the counter-cases of my quadrant, telescopes, and clock, and several such like things.

Our camels were now reduced to five, and it did not seem that these were capable of continuing the journey much longer. In that case no remedy remained, but that each man should *carry his own water and provisions* ; and, as it was impos-

sible for a man to carry his provisions who could scarcely walk without any burden at all, our situation seemed to be most desperate.

The Bishareen alone seemed to keep up his strength, and was in excellent spirits. He had attached himself in a particular manner to me, and with part of a scanty rag, which he had round his waist, he had made a wrapper, which greatly defended my feet in the day, but the pain occasioned by the cold in the night was scarcely bearable. I offered to free his left hand, which was chained to some one of the company day and night, but he refused, saying, "Unchain my hands when you load and unload your camels, I cannot then run away from you ; for, though you did not shoot me, I should starve with hunger and thirst. Keep me to the end of the journey as you began with me, then I cannot misbehave, and lose the reward which you say you are to give me."

Halting at Umgwat, where we found abundance of good water, I had an opportunity of forming a conjecture, from the flight of a bird of the duck kind, as to the nearness of the Nile. The bird, when startled, flew straight west, rising very high as he flew, a sure proof that his journey was a long one. This night it was told me that Georgis and the Turk Ismael were both so ill, and so desponding, that they had resolved to pursue the journey no farther, but submit to their destiny, as they called it, and stay behind and die. It was with the utmost difficulty that I could get them to lay aside this resolution ; and the next morning I promised they should ride by turns upon one of the camels, a thing that none of us had yet done.

At Haimer, where we halted on the following day, we met a troop of Arabs, who turned out to be Ababdé. They pointed out

to me the direction of Syene, which I found to be N.N.W. from Haimer. Two days afterwards we met with a bitter disappointment, on leaving a place called Abou Heregi. The whole plain before us seemed thickly covered with green grass and yellow daisies. We advanced with what speed our lame condition would suffer us ; but how terrible was our disappointment when we found the whole of that verdure to consist of senna and coloquintida, the most nauseous of plants, and the most incapable of being substituted as food for man or beast. We alighted in the evening at Saffieha, which is a ridge of craggy mountains. We were now very near a crisis. Our bread was consumed, so that we had not sufficient for one day more ; and, though we had camel's flesh, yet, by living so long on bread and water, we felt an invincible repugnance to it. As our camels were at their last gasp, we had taken so sparingly of water that, when we came to divide it, we found it insufficient for our necessities, even if Syene was so near as we conceived it to be.

Georgis had lost one eye, and was nearly blind of the other. Ismael and he had both become so stiff by being carried, that they could not bear to set their feet to the ground ; and I may say for myself, that, though I had supported the wounds in my feet with a patience very uncommon, they were now perfectly intolerable, and, I feared, on the point of mortification. We determined, in this strait, to throw away the quadrant, telescopes, and time-keeper, and save our lives by riding the camels alternately. But Providence had decreed that we should not terminate this dangerous journey by our own ordinary foresight and contrivance, but owe it entirely to His visible support and interposition.

Next morning, 27th November, we attempted to raise our

camels by every method that we could devise, but in vain. Only one of them could be got upon his legs, and he did not stand two minutes till he kneeled down, and could never be raised again. This the Arabs all declared to be the effect of cold ; and yet Fahrenheit's thermometer, an hour before day, stood at 42°. Every way we turned death now stared us in the face. We had neither time nor strength to waste, nor provisions to support us. We then took the small skins that had contained our water, and filled them as far as we thought a man could carry them with ease ; but, after all these shifts, there was not enough to serve us three days, at which I had estimated our journey to Syene, which still, however, was uncertain. Finding, therefore, that the camels would not rise, we killed two of them, and took as much flesh as might serve for the deficiency of bread. From the stomach of each of the camels we got about four gallons of water.

Nothing but death was before our eyes ; and, in these terrible moments of pain, suffering, and despair, honour, instead of relieving me, suggested still what was to be an augmentation to my misfortune. The drawings made at Palmyra and Baalbec for the king, and other not less valuable papers, with my quadrant, telescopes, and time-keeper, were to be abandoned to the rude and ignorant hands of robbers, or to be buried in the sands. Every memorandum, every description, sketch, or observation, since I departed from Badjoura and passed the desert to Cosseir, till I reached the present spot, were left in an undigested heap, with the carrion of our camels, at Saffieha, while there remained with me, in lieu of all my memoranda, but this mournful consideration, that I was now to maintain the reality of these my tedious perils, with those who either did, or might affect, from malice or envy, to doubt my veracity, upon my *ipse dixit* alone, or abandon

the reputation of the travels I had made with so much courage and danger, and which had been considered, for more than two thousand years, to be utterly impracticable.

I would not be understood to mean by this, that my thoughts were at such a time in the least disturbed with any reflection on the paltry lies that might be propagated in malignant circles, who meeting, as they say, for the advancement of learning, employ themselves in blasting the fame of those who must be allowed to have surpassed them in every circumstance of intrepidity, forethought, and fair achievement. The censure of these lion-faced and chicken-hearted critics never entered as an ingredient in my sorrows on that occasion ; if I had not possessed spirit enough to despise these, the smallest trouble that occurred in my travels must have overcome a mind so feebly armed. My regret was, that I should be deprived of a considerable part of an offering I meant as a mark of duty to my sovereign ; that, with those who knew and esteemed me, I should be obliged to run in debt for the credit of a whole narrative of circumstances, which ought, from their importance to history and geography, to have a better foundation than the mere memory of any man ; and, above all, that chance alone, in this age of discovery, had robbed my country of the fairest garland of this kind which she could ever wear.

This day we travelled for five hours and a half, and at night we encamped among some trees, at Waadiel Arab. On the following day, from a rising ground, I got a view of a range of hills marking the course of the Nile. In the stillness of the evening I distinctly heard the noise of waters. Shortly after this welcome sound first reached me, I saw a flock of birds, which I recognized as belonging to the Nile. Idris confirmed this. Christians,

Moors, and Turks, all burst into tears, embracing one another, and thanking God for his mercy in this deliverance.

That night we encamped at Abou Seielat, and next morning we came in sight of Assouan. About ten in the forenoon we halted in a grove of palm trees, outside of the city.

## CHAPTER XIX.

*Home through Egypt—Reception at Syene—Interview with the Aga  
—A conversation about Idolatry—Arrival at Cairo—A rude  
Summons—Interview with the Bey of Cairo—I procure a Fir-  
man in favour of English Trading Vessels—Sail for Alexandria  
—My Baggage in Danger—I arrive at Marseilles.*

**W**ITHOUT congratulating one another on their escape and safe arrival, as they had done the night before at Abou Seielat, my companions, with one accord, ran to the Nile to drink. I sat down under the shade of the palm trees, where I soon fell into a profound sleep. Hagi Ismael, who was neither sleepy nor thirsty, but exceedingly hungry, had gone into the town in search of food. He had not gone far before his green turban and ragged appearance attracted the notice of some janizaries, one of whom asked him the reason of his being there, and whence he came. Ismael in a violent passion, and in broken Arabic, said that he was a janizary of Cairo; that he was last come from hell, where there was not one devil, but thousands; and that he had walked through a desert where the earth was on fire and the wind was flame.

The soldier who heard him talk in this disjointed, raving manner, desired him to go with him to the Aga. This was the very thing that Ismael wanted; he only desired time to acquaint *his* companions. "Have you companions," says the soldier, "from

such a country?" "Companions!" exclaimed Ismael, "do you imagine I came this journey alone? Go to the palm trees, and when you find the tallest man you ever saw in your life, more ragged and dirty than I am, call him Yagoubé, and desire him to come along with you to the Aga."

The soldier accordingly found me at the foot of the palm tree, and roused me from my stupor by calling out, "you must come to the Aga, to the castle, all of you, as fast as you can. The Turk has gone before you." It was with great pain and difficulty that I could stand upright. The whole town crowded after us, while we walked to the castle, wondering at our uncouth appearance, and the monstrous blunderbusses carried by Ismael and Michael. The Aga seemed as if struck dumb upon our entering the room, and told me afterwards that he thought me a full foot taller than any man he had ever seen in his life.

"Where are your letters and firman?" asked the Aga.

"Where they may be now, I know not," said I; "but we left them at Saffieha with all the rest of our baggage. Our camels died, our provisions and water were exhausted, we therefore left everything behind us, and made this one effort to save our lives. It is the first favour I am to ask of you, when I shall have rested myself two days, to allow me to get fresh camels, to go in search of my letters and baggage."

"God forbid," said the Aga, "I should ever suffer you to do so mad an action! You are come hither by a thousand miracles; and, after this, will you tempt God, and go back? We shall take it for granted what those papers contain. You will have no need of a firman between this and Cairo."

"I am," replied I, "a servant of the king of England, travelling by his order, and for my own and my countrymen's infor-



mation ; and I had rather risk my life twenty times than lose the papers I have left in the desert ?

"Go in peace," said the Aga, "eat and sleep. Carry them," added he to the attendants, "to the house of the Schourbatchie."

After resting for five or six days, I procured camels, and retraced my steps to Saffieha, where I had the unspeakable satisfaction of recovering my quadrant, and all the rest of my baggage. We quickly loaded the camels ; and, having camels for ourselves as well as for the baggage, we made a brisk and easy return.

Here I was to close my travels through the desert by discharging the debts contracted in it. I had now got my letters, by means of which I was supplied with money. I began by recompensing Idris, the Hybeer, for his faithful service. The next thing was to keep faith with our prisoner. I made Idris choose for him a good camel, clothed him anew, and gave him dresses for his two wives, and a load of dora. The poor fellow took leave of me with tears in his eyes, declaring, that if I would permit him, he would only go back and deliver what I had given him to his family, and return to Syene, to follow me as my servant wherever I should go.

Having procured such clothes as we required, and, moreover, furnished Ismael with a green turban, to give us some weight with the vulgar during our voyage down the Nile, I went to the Aga, to arrange for our departure. Ismael had told him of the trees and plants which I painted, and he expressed great curiosity to see them. I at once sent my servant for a book of trees, and one of fishes.

When the drawings were brought, I turned to the trees and flowers. The Aga was greatly pleased with them, and laughed, *putting them* to his nose, as if smelling them. They did not offend

him, as they were not the likeness of anything that had life. I then showed him a fish, and reached the book to a cheerful-looking old man, with a long beard, whom the Aga had several times called his father. "Do not be angry," said he to me, "if I ask you a question."

"I will answer all your questions with pleasure," said I; "and in your turn, you must not take the answer ill."

"No, no," said two or three of those present, "Hagi Soliman knows better."

*Soliman*.—"Do you not believe that that fish will rise against you at the day of judgment?"

*Yagoubé*.—"I do not know; but I shall be very much surprised if it does."

*Sol*.—"I assure you he will."

*Ya*.—"Be it so; it is a matter of indifference to me."

*Sol*.—"Do you know what God will say to you about that fish; shall I tell you?"

*Ya*.—"I have not the least idea; and you will oblige me."

*Sol*.—"God will say to you—'Did you make that fish?' What will you answer?"

*Ya*.—"I will answer, 'I did.'"

*Sol*.—"He will say to you again, 'Make a soul to it.'"

*Ya*.—"I will answer, 'I cannot.'"

*Sol*.—"He will say—'Why did you make that fish's body, when you were not capable of giving it a soul.' What can you answer then?"

*Ya*.—"I made that body, because Thou gavest me talents and capacity to do it. I do not make the soul, because Thou hast denied me power and ability, and reserved that to Thyself alone."

*Sol.*—"Do you think He will be contented with that answer?"

*Ya.*—"I do most certainly think so. It is truth, and I do not think a more direct one can be given."

*Sol.*—"Aha! the Moullah would tell you that will not do; painting things that have life is idolatry, and the punishment is hell-fire."

*Ya.*—"Then my case is desperate; for it is not a sin I intend to repent of."

Thus ended this curious discussion, and we parted in perfect good humour with one another. The Aga, seeing my feet much inflamed and wounded, made me a present of a pair of slippers of soft Turkey leather, to defend them from the inclemency of the weather.

It was the 11th of December when we left Syene. I can scarcely say *sailed*, for our masts being down, we just floated down with the current. In our voyage down the Nile, we had very indifferent weather, but being better clothed and better fed than in the desert, we were not so sensible of it. I passed Shekh Nimmer, not without regret; but it was night and excessively cold, and I was very ill.

On the 20th we arrived at Furshout, where I lodged in the convent of Italian friars, at which I had been entertained when ascending the Nile, at the outset of this journey, in January 1769. These fathers had refused to supply with provisions a messenger I sent to them the day before from How, one of them asserting that I was drowned in the Red Sea, and another declaring that he had good authority for affirming that I had been murdered in Abyssinia. When I made my appearance, they offered some awkward apologies for their inhospitable treatment of my servant. If these

fathers, the sole object of whose mission was the conversion of Ethiopia and Nubia, were before averse to the undertaking of their mission, they did not seem to increase in zeal for it from the circumstances which they learned from me.

On the 27th we sailed for Cairo. Nothing of the slightest consequence occurred on our passage down the river. We arrived at the Convent of St. George, at Cairo, on the 10th of January 1773. If the Capuchins at Furshout received us coldly, these Caloyeros of St. George kept us at a still greater distance. It was half by violence that we got admittance into the convent. But this difficulty was to be of but short duration ; the morning was to end it, and give us a sight of our friends, and in the meantime we were to sleep soundly. But we forgot we were at Cairo, no longer to depend on the ordinary or rational course of events, but upon the arbitrary oppressive will of irrational tyrants. Accordingly, I had scarcely enjoyed an hour's sound sleep when I was awakened by the sound of a number of strange voices, and presently about a dozen soldiers entered the place where I was lying. They summoned me very rudely to get up, and accompany them to the Bey. After taking some time to arrange my toilet, I complied. I had no shirt on, nor had I been master of one for fourteen months past. I had a waistcoat of coarse, brown woollen blanket, trousers of the same, and upper blanket of the same material wrapt about me. I had cut off my long beard at Furshout, but still wore prodigious mustaches. I had a thin white muslin cloth round a red Turkish cap, a girdle of coarse woollen cloth, with English pistols and an Abyssinian knife stuck in it, and I was without either shoes or stockings. Thus equipped, I was ushered by these banditti, in a dark and very windy night, to the door of the convent.

The Sarach, or commander of the party, rode upon a mule ;

and, as a mark of extreme consideration, he had brought an ass for me. As the beast had no saddle or stirrups, my feet would have touched the ground, had I not held them up, which I did with the utmost pain and difficulty, as they were still very inflamed. Nobody can ever know, from a more particular description, the hundredth part of the pain I suffered that night. I was happy that it was all external. I had hardened my heart : it was strong, vigorous, and whole, from the near prospect I had of leaving this most accursed country, and being again restored to the conversation of men.

In this disagreeable manner I rode three miles, before arriving at the Bey's palace. There all was light and bustle, as if it had been noonday. I was immediately introduced to Mahomet Bey Abou Dahab. He was son-in-law to Ali Bey, my friend, whom he had betrayed, and forced to flee into Syria, where he still was, at the head of a small army. Two large sofas, furnished with cushions, took up a great part of the spacious saloon. The Bey was sitting on one of them, in full dress ; his girdle, turban, and the handle of his dagger, were all shining with the finest brilliants, and a magnificent sprig of diamonds was in his turban. The rooms were as light as day, with a number of wax candles or torches. I found myself humbled at the sight of so much greatness and affluence. My feet were so dirty, I had a scruple to set them upon the rich Persian carpets, and the pain that walking at all occasioned gave me altogether so crouching and cringing a look, that the Bey, on seeing me come in, cried out, "What's that ? Who is that ? From whence does he come ?"

"Mahomet Bey," said I in Arabic, with a low bow, "I am Yagoubé, an Englishman, better known to your father-in-law than to you, very unfit to appear before you in the condition in which

I am, having been forced out of my bed by your soldiers, in the middle of the only sound sleep I have had for many years."

He seemed to be exceedingly shocked at this, and said to his attendants in Turkish, "My people! Who dares do this? It is impossible." They reminded him that, after seeing Ismael (who had gone straight to the Bey, on our arrival at Cairo, to bespeak his favour for me), he had himself sent for me. He turned himself with great violence on the sofa, and said, "I remember the man well, but it was not a man like this. I was going to ask you, Yagoube," said he, turning to me, "who those were who had brought you out in such distress, and I find that I have done it myself; but take my word, as I am a Mussulman, I did not intend it, I did not know you were ill."

When he saw my feet in such a painful condition, he at once desired me to sit down on the cushion. "I have many questions to ask you," said he, after some further conversation. "You have been very kind to poor old Ismael, who is a sheriffe, and to my Christian servant likewise; and I wanted to see what I could do for you; but this is not the time. Go home and sleep; I will send for you. Eat and drink, and fear nothing. My father-in-law is gone, but, by the grace of God, I am here in his place; that is enough." I bowed, and took my leave.

A slave followed me, with a small basket of oranges in his hand, and said to me, when I reached the outer lobby, "Here Yagoube, here is some fruit for you." In that country it is not the value of the present, but the character and power of the person who sends it, that causes it to be esteemed. Twenty thousand men who slept in Cairo that night would have thought the day the Bey gave them, at an audience, the worst orange in that basket, the happiest one in their life. It is a mark of friendship

and protection, and the best of all assurances. Well accustomed to ceremonies of this kind, I took a single orange, bowing low to the man that gave it to me. He whispered, "Pat your hand to the bottom, the best fruit is there; the whole is for you, it is from the Bey." A large, well-filled purse was exceedingly visible. I lifted it out and kissed it, out of respect to the person from whom it came, and said to the young man who held the basket, "This is, indeed, the best fruit, at least commonly thought so, but it is forbidden fruit to me. The Bey's protection and favour are more agreeable to me than a thousand such purses would be."

The servant showed prodigious surprise. Nothing can be more incredible to a Turk than that any man should refuse money when it is offered to him. It appeared to the slave so extraordinary that a beggar in a barracan should refuse a purse of gold, that he could not consent to my going away, but carried me back to the Bey. The servant gave a long explanation in Turkish, whereupon the Bey turned to me, saying, "Why, what is this? You must surely want money; that is not your usual dress? Does this proceed from pride?"

"Sir," answered I, "there is not a man, to whom you ever gave money, more grateful than I am at this present. The reason of my waiting upon you in this dress is, because it is only a few hours ago that I left the boat. I am not, however, a needy man; and, that being the case, as you have already my prayers for your charity, I would not deprive you of those of the widow and the orphan, whom that money may very materially relieve. Julian and Rosa, the first house in Cairo, will furnish me with what money I require; besides, I am in the service of the greatest king in Europe, who would not fail to supply me abundantly if my necessities required it, as I am travelling in his service."

"This being so," said the Bey, in whose opinion I could see I had risen considerably, from my refusal of money, "what is in my power to do for you?"

"There are," said I, "things that you could do, and you only, if it were not too great presumption for me to name them."

"By no means," answered he, "if I can, I will do it; if not, I will tell you so."

"I have, sir," said I, "a number of countrymen, brave, rich, and honest, that trade in India, where my king has great dominions. Many of these come to Jidda. The Sherriffe of Mecca has of late laid duty upon duty, and extortion upon extortion, till the English are on the point of giving up the trade altogether."

"Why," said the Bey, "when they say you are such a brave nation, why don't you beat down Jidda about his ears? Have you no guns in your ships?"

"Jidda," replied I, "could not resist one of our ships for an hour. But it is no part of our dominions; and, in countries belonging to stranger princes, we carry ourselves lowly, and trade in peace, never using force till obliged to do so in our own defence."

"And what would you have me to do?" asked he.

"Our people," said I, "wish to bring their ships and merchandise to Suez, instead of Jidda; for they say they might then depend upon your word, that, if they were punctual in fulfilling their engagements, they should never find you failing in yours."

"That they shall never have to say of me," said the Bey; "all this is to my advantage. But you do not tell me what I am to do for you."

"Be steady, sir, in your promise," said I. "It is now late, but I will come again to settle the duties with you; and be



assured, that when it is known at home what, at my private desire, you have done for my country in general, it will be the greatest honour that ever a prince conferred on me in my life."

"Why, let it be so," said he. "Bring coffee," he added, to the attendants; "see you admit him whenever he calls; bring a caftan."\*

I was received with greater respect when I went down stairs than when I came up. The man was the same—it was the caftan that made the difference!

I was twice after this with Mahomet Bey, in which time I concluded the agreement in favour of the English merchants. Instead of 14 per cent, and an enormous present, the Bey agreed for 8 per cent, and no present at all; and, at his own expense, he sent the firman to Mocha, together with a letter from myself to Captain Thornhill, and the other commanders of English vessels at Jidda. Mr. Greig, Captain Thornhill's lieutenant, in the *Minerva*, was the first who came down the gulf to Suez to take advantage of the privileges granted by this firman. No ship has ever yet entered the Red Sea, as I am informed, without a copy of my letter and firman.

Mahomet Bey being about to depart to give battle to his father-in-law, I thought it was no longer convenient for me to stay at Cairo. The Bey pressed me to go to the camp with him; but I was sufficiently cured of Quixotic undertakings.

"You won't go," said the Bey, "and be a soldier: what will you do at home? You are not an India merchant?"

I said, "No."

"Have you no other trade or occupation than that of travelling?"

\* A loose garment—a gift of ceremony, and mark of favour.

"That is my occupation," said I.

"Ali Bey, my father-in-law," said he "often observed that there was never such a people as the English—no other nation could be compared to them, and none had so many great men in all professions, by sea and land : I never understood this till now ; that I see it must be so, when your king cannot find other employment for such a man as you, but sending him to perish by hunger and thirst in the sands, or to have his throat cut by the barbarians of the desert."

I saw that the march of the Bey would be a signal for all Egypt being presently in disorder, and I did not delay a moment to set out for Alexandria, where I arrived without anything remarkable. There I found my ship ready, and, on the following day, sailed for Europe.

A violent storm overtook us off Cyprus, and the captain was much alarmed, but the wind calmed next day. I was lying in bed, unwell, when the captain came, and sat down by my side. "Now the matter is over," said he, "will you tell me one thing ? It is mere curiosity ; I will not let any one know."

"Before I tell you," said I, "I daresay you will not. What is it ?"

"How many of those things, you know," said he, winking, "have you on board ?"

"Upon the word of a man," answered I, "I do not know what you mean."

"*Ces morts !* these dead men !" said he. "How many have you in these trunks ? for last night the crew were going to throw all your boxes overboard."

"I can tell you, captain," said I, "that you and they had better have been in bed sick of a fever, than been guilty of that unpro-

voked violence. 'Brutal as a Provençal,' is a proverb even in your own country ; I would not wish to have such a confirmation of the truth of it. But here are my keys, in case another gale should come. Choose out of my trunks the one that, according to your ideas and theirs, is likeliest to have a dead man in it, and then take another ; and the first one you find, throw them all overboard."

I forced him to open two of the chests, and lucky it was, as I believe ; for off the island of Malta we had another violent gale, which, however, did us no damage. At last, after a passage of about three weeks, we landed happily at Marseilles.

After all, though we exalt Fortune into a divinity, the true good luck is Prudence :—

*"Nullum numen abest, si sit prudentia ; sed Te,  
Nos facimus, Fortuna, Deam, cæloque locamus."*

JUVEN.

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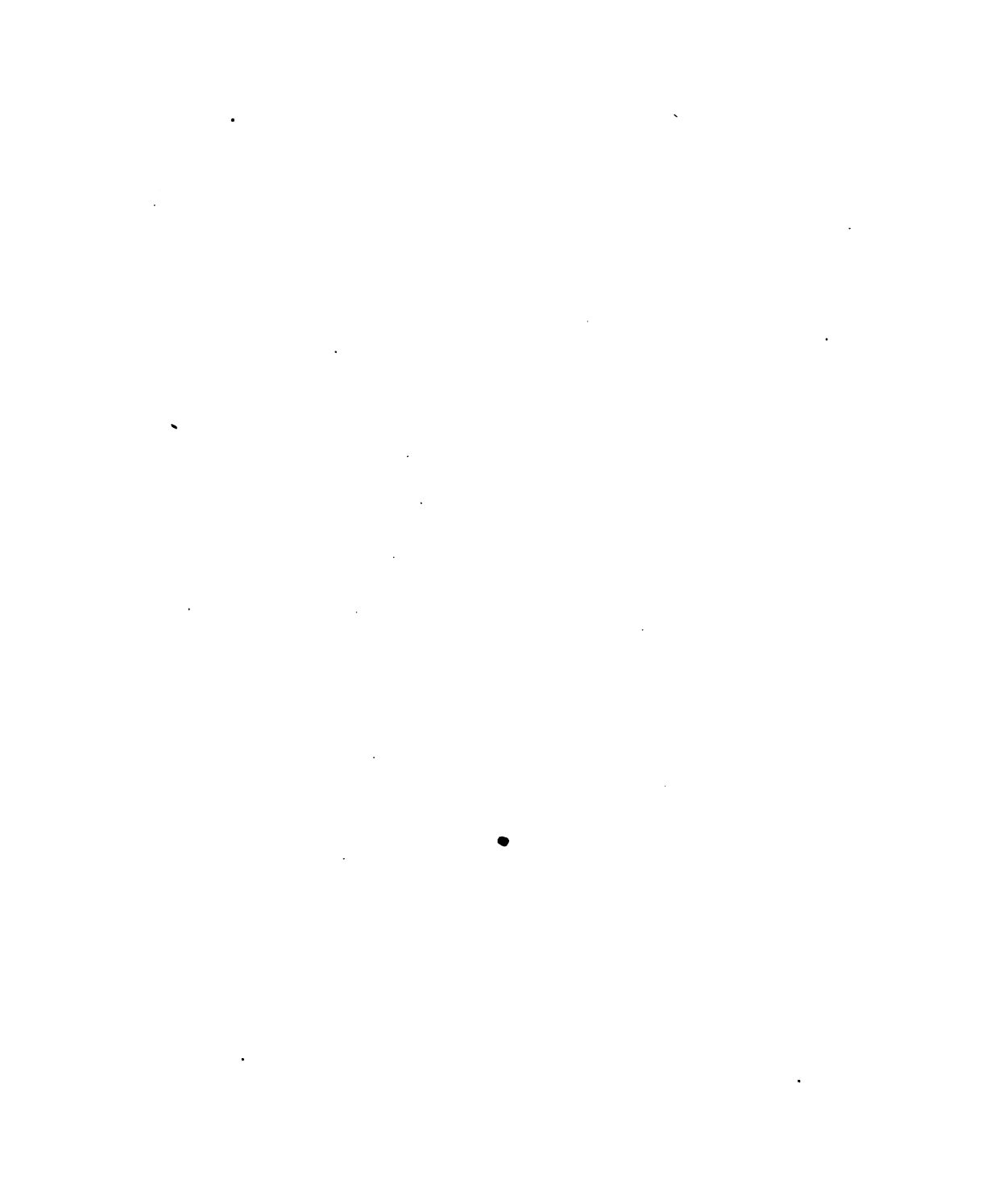


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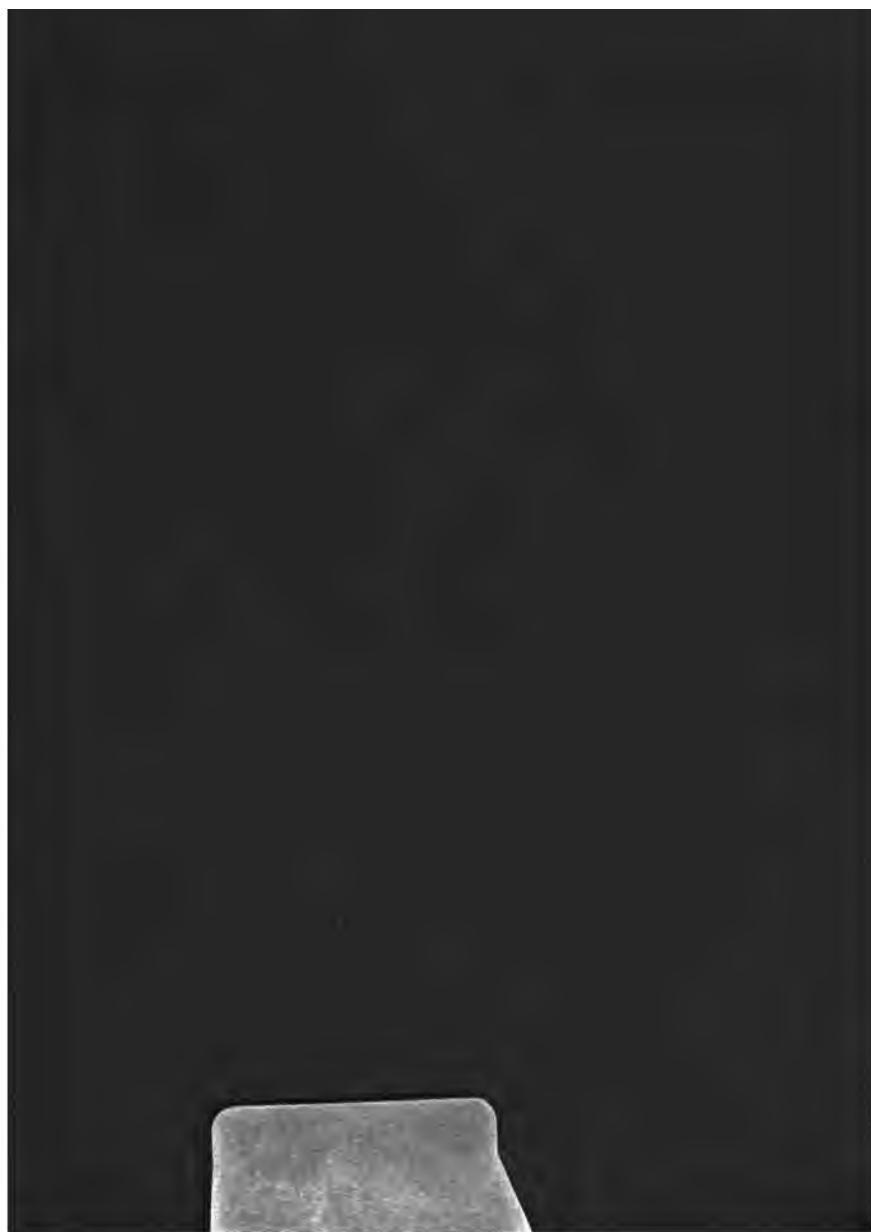
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